THE TIMES

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Europe's cowardly Parliament Simon Jenkins page 22

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President refuses to testify in Senate

Battle begins for Clinton's survival

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton was accused of "egregious and criminal" conduct at the start of the Senate trial yesterday to determine whether he will be thrown out of office in the first impeachment hearings for 131 years.

Leading Republicans from the House of Representatives opened the prosecution by declaring that Mr Clinton had "put himself above the law" by committing perjury and attempting to obstruct justice after his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

He had defied the fundamental principles and ideals on which the United States is founded, said James Sensenbrenner, a House Republican. "We must not allow the beacon to grow dim or the American dream to disappear," he said.

Mr Clinton spent the day discussing the worsening Brazilian financial crisis with Cabinet members, and attending a crime prevention event in Virginia, before flying to New York to encourage Wall Street to invest more in minority interests.

The White House yesterday declared that the House case was based on political revenge, not law, that the Founding Fathers had never intended that one party should be able "to remove a President at their whim", and that Mr Clinton would not testify on the floor of the Senate. Yesterday it emerged that Ms Lewinsky had rebuffed an invitation to talk to the House Judiciary Committee, although she could still be subpoenaed. She has been shuttling between her mother's New York apartment and her father's home in Los Angeles, while working with Andrew Morton on a book about the affair.

The trial opened promptly at 1pm with the 100 senators, now recast as the President's 100 jurors, sitting silently as dictated by a lengthy code on decorum and etiquette. After William Rehnquist, the Chief Justice, banged the opening gavel, the Senate chaplain delivered a prayer, calling on God to "help us through this difficult time . . . continue to make the senators one in this search for truth . . . and help them keep intact their bipartisan spirit in their search for justice".

The huge, white-haired, stooping figure of Republican Henry Hyde, then took the lectern in front of the podium. Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr Hyde heads the prosecution team, which will take up to 24 hours over the next three days to press for Mr Clinton's conviction.

Mr Hyde said that the House had impeached Mr Clinton simply because he had violated his oath to tell the truth and uphold the laws of the nation.

"More than 450 years ago, Sir Thomas More, former Lord Chancellor of England, the most brilliant lawyer of his generation, the centre of a warm and affectionate family life which he cherished, went to his death rather than take an oath in vain," he said.

Then Mr Sensenbrenner laid out the House's case that Mr Clinton had "put himself above thelaw, not once, not

Continued on page 2, col 3

Clinton trial, pages 14, 15



Sir Thomas More resigned as Lord Chancellor in 1532 because he could not square his conscience with Henry VIII's determination to divorce Catherine of Aragon. He later refused to swear an oath recognising Anne Boleyn's children as Henry's heirs, was accused of treason and beheaded. He was canonised in 1935.





Jenny Bramley with Hannah Bennett and her husband Jeff with Jade. They have now been offered the hope of becoming an official family

Runaway couple offered adoption hope

BY CLAUDIA JOSEPH

SOCIAL workers backed down yesterday and offered the couple who have gone into hiding with their foster children the chance to keep them.

In a personal appeal to Jeff and Jennifer Bramley, Liz Railton, director of Cambridge social services, said the courts should decide whether they can adopt Jade and Hannah Bennett. She said: "The Bramleys asked for the girls' future to be determined by someone independent of the county council. We feel the best way of doing this is to ask the courts to determine what is best for the children.

"The courts can hear both sides. The Bramleys can present their side of the story and we can present ours. This way, Hannah and Jade can be represented by the official solicitor.

"If Mr and Mrs Bramley come back with Jade and Hannah, we will not stand in the way of them issuing a further adoption application and resolving the long-term future of these two vulnerable little girls through the courts. In the immediate term, we feel the court, not us, should determine whether Jade and Hannah live whilst any adoption application is considered."

Cambridge County Council's decision may have been prompted by Jackie Bennett, 24, the girls' mother, who is taking legal action over their future. Raphael Silver, her solicitor, said: "We have started legal proceedings, the purpose of which is to ask a court to decide what is in the best interests of Jade and Hannah. She is confident that the court, in deciding this very delicate issue, will take all relevant matters into consideration.

"Jackie hopes that by taking this action, Mr and Mrs Bramley will feel more capable of returning the children safely and speedily because they will know that the future for these little girls willl not be determined solely by Cambridgeshire County Council but by an independent judicial body."

Miss Bennett later welcomed Ms Railton's approach, and said: "I just don't think it's right that Jeff and Jenny should be treated as criminals. They've done what they have done because they love the children. It just wouldn't help anyone, particularly Jade and Hannah, for them to be charged."

Ms Railton made her appeal in a letter to the couple, who disappeared from their home in Ramsey four months ago on the day they were due to hand back Jade, five, and Hannah, three, into local authority care. They had been fostering the sisters since March and wanted to adopt them but social workers ruled they had "inadequate parenting skills".

Earlier this week, the couple sent an emotional letter to newspapers appealing to be allowed to keep the children. Now Ms Railton has replied, saying: "I know you have made no secret of your desire to adopt Jade and Hannah and I would urge you to return home and submit an adoption application that will resolve the future of these two little girls. If you issue that application, I will not object to the court considering your application and hearing all sides of the story.

"I understand your concern about what will happen to Jade and Hannah while the adoption application is being considered by the courts. I would like the courts to decide the girls' immediate future as well."

Her offer was welcomed by Cambridgeshire Police, which has indicated that the couple may not face prosecution if the youngsters are returned unharmed.



"Delivery for God"

The Pope rejects image of God as a white man with a beard .... Page 3

First Sierra Man: now Blair sets sights on Woking Man

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR yesterday declared that Labour needed to appeal to a new, expanding middle class to keep the party in power for the next ten years.

In an attempt to shift attention from personalities and on to policy, the Prime Minister argued that the old establishment was being swept away by a new "meritocratic" middle class which included millions who once considered themselves working class.

He used his first major speech since the Christmas break to make clear that he would not be deflected from his modernising agenda.

He insisted that he would not abandon traditional Labour voters, but redefined the "middle classes" to include all with aspirations to move up the social ladder. Addressing the Institute for Public Policy Research, he said that the new middle class was characterised by greater tolerance of difference, greater ambition to succeed and greater opportunities to earn a decent living.

The Prime Minister's comments were seen as an attempt to woo Woking Man, the Southern voters with working-class backgrounds but middle-class aspirations that Labour sought to attract at the last election — then typified as Sierra Man because of Mr Blair's anecdote about how he was inspired by a man he had seen polishing his car.

"Far from abandoning our traditional support, we are saying that in a modern Britain everyone must have a chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, age, sex or race," he said. "This Government has a ten-year programme to tackle poverty and social exclusion. At the end of it I believe we will have an expanded middle class, with ladders of opportunity for those from all backgrounds, not more ceilings that prevent people from achieving the success they merit."

Mr Blair's comments came as Labour agreed to extend co-operation with the Liberal Democrats from constitutional reform to discussing a common European foreign and security policy. There has been pressure from some Cabinet ministers, including John Prescott, to draw back from closer links after the resignation of Peter Mandelson, a key advocate of close co-operation.

In a separate move, the Government appealed to Middle Englanders by proposing the setting up of a grand committee of the English regions. In a sop to those alarmed by the prospect of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly, Margaret Beckett, Leader of the House, proposed a committee that would be able to discuss issues and hold ministers to account. Both moves will be seen as attempts to reassure the middle classes that Mr Mandelson's resignation will not push Mr Blair off course and that there will be no return to high-tax, high-spend policies.

At the Cabinet meeting, Mr Blair urged his colleagues to be more self-disciplined to allow the Government to get back on track and fulfil its election commitments.

In his speech earlier, he said that the NHS, education, crime and welfare were top priorities in Labour's reforming agenda. "Make no mistake, we are shifting power wealth and opportunity into the hands of the many and not the few."

Peter Riddell, page 8
Leading article, page 23

Santer's team survives

The European Commission was left intact but wounded yesterday after the narrow defeat of a challenge from the European Parliament over fraud and mismanagement.

The assembly failed to support a censure vote that would have sacked the whole Commission, and it rejected a separate attempt to oust Edith Cresson and Manuel Marin, the two most tainted commissioners. However, it launched an outside fraud inquiry and gave Jacques Santer, President of the Commission, two months to clean up management practices and dismiss anyone held culpable.....Page 18

Blair honoured by Germany

Tony Blair has been awarded Germany's prestigious Charlemagne prize for his efforts towards Britain's integration with Europe and for the Northern Ireland peace process. Previous winners include Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Henry Kissinger and Vaclav Havel.

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Smokers are told to work king-size hours

BY TIM JONES

DIEHARD smokers among a council's staff have been told they must work an extra 2½ hours a week to make up for their cigarette breaks.

Thurrock Council in Essex says that every time a smoker leaves the building to satisfy the nicotine craving it places an unfair extra workload on a non-smoking colleague.

They will therefore be asked to sign a contract extending their working hours from 37 to 39½ hours a week. The policy is based on the assumption that smokers take two 15-minute breaks a day to leave the office and light up.

Manny Lewis, the council's head of personnel, said that as part of the drive to eradicate smoking the council and the local health authority had earmarked £10,000 to provide professional counsellors to help people to kick the habit.

He said: "This is being introduced to safeguard the health and safety of all our employees and to minimise our legal liability. We do not want to be hit by a huge damages claim for injuries caused by passive smoking."

The council banned desktop smoking many years ago, and instead provided smoking rooms. But these have just been abolished. Martin Mallin, the council's spokesman, said: "We are not seeking to be draconian, but our community consultations show that health is a number one priority.

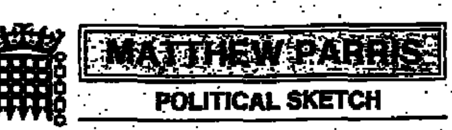
"We can hardly educate people about health care if we allow smoking in our own offices. And why should smokers take breaks which are not allowed to other workers?"

But Pat McMaster, 53, a dedicated smoker who works in the council's property services department, claimed the policy was "oppressive". He said: "When they banned smoking at the desks they gave us smoking rooms, which we accepted. Now those have been taken away and we have to stand outside in the cold. This has nothing to do with health. It is all to do with money. They forget the unpaid overtime we all put in."

However Mrs Sally Fisher, a non-smoker, said: "I welcome this move and believe that if they must smoke it is only fair they should work longer hours."

Although the policy includes most of the council's 4,500 employees, open-air workers such as road sweepers and gravediggers will be allowed to puff to their heart's content.

Blunkett gets his sums wrong as MPs divide by gender



Every now and again a minister is bowled middle-stump. Yesterday was David Blunkett's turn.

Ministers had been boasting about the New Deal for Young People. The cost of each job gained as a result of the scheme, they claimed, was only £1,000. A snip!

Damian Green smelt a rat. The Tory employment spokesman and his boss, David "two-brains" Willetts, made a quick calculation. Green rose. Would the Education and Employment Secretary explain the huge sum the Government had allocated to the New Deal, if the cost per job was so modest? Calling Green dimwitted, Blunkett explained that the £1,000 figure was reached *after* deducting the Treasury's gain (because the job-finder would pay taxes *instead* of claiming benefit).

It seemed, then, that Blunkett's figure represented not the cost, but the *loss* sustained per job: more was being spent than being saved. Green and Willetts looked amazed.

I certainly was. I made further inquiries with the department. Apparently we misunderstood Mr Blunkett. The £1,000 price-tag does *not* take account of Treasury savings. It represents the cost of helping the successful job-finder into the job — but takes *no* account of what is spent on those who do not get jobs. By this reasoning (or am I mad?) if £1 million is spent on making a thousand youths more employable, but only one youth finds work, and £1,000 was spent on him, Blunkett will tell MPs that the venture is costing £1,000 per job. Some of us would think the cost was £1 million per job.

Maybe it was too soon after breakfast. For that was yesterday's other novelty. For the first time in decades, Questions are being taken in the morning, on Thursdays at 11.30am. It felt odd, wrong. The House Leader, Margaret Beckett, announcing the next week's business, seemed quite thrown by the hour and got her days of the week all muddled up. Bore-extraordinaire Norman Baker (Lib-Dem, Lewes) failed to turn up for his Question — something which has never been known before.

But the House was well-attended. Interestingly, traditional gender-roles have asserted themselves at Questions. Most of yesterday's questions concerned education. Of the 60 Members present on the Government benches, 38 were men and 22 were women. Nearly a quarter of Labour's women MPs were there — and less than a tenth of the Party's males. I have noticed a similar balance at Social Security and Health Questions.

This is partly because women are, overall, better Commons attenders; but it cannot explain why at Defence (or Agriculture) Questions, the proportion of women slumps. Heaven forbid that we should divide parliamentary business into girls' talk and boys' talk — but it seems MPs do.

Are parents reinforcing gender stereotypes by giving politically inclined little girls Virginia Bottomley "close-your-own-hospital" games and Harriet Harman "bash-a-single-mum" kits to play with? Little boys should be distracted from Gordon Brown "Treasury Action Man" sets or Heza-dolls in flak jackets. Still, we all speak best from personal experience. Yesterday an impassioned Peter Luff (C, Mid-Worcestershire) urged ministers to greater efforts in training adults in the education of left-handed children. Later I watched him taking notes. Yes — you guessed.

So the left-handed have their quotient of left-handed politicians. The female sex have more than a hundred women MPs. As for the statistically-challenged — we have at least one Secretary of State.

TODAY ON PAGE 22

The opinion formers... Challenging *minds* in the changing Times



Philip Howard

'The editor, sitting at a bar accosted by a prostitute...'



Mary Ann Sieghart

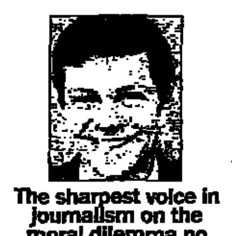
'Peter Mandelson is an arsonist firefighter'



Simon Jenkins

'MEPs had the ball at their feet... and sent it soaring over the bar'

TOMORROW



The sharpest voice in journalism on the moral dilemma no government can resolve

Matthew Parris



The writer who really gets under Europe's skin on the cliques that count

Ben Macintyre

Regions of England to be given a voice

By Roland Watson and James Landale

A COMMONS committee designed to give the English regions a distinct voice in Parliament following Scottish and Welsh devolution is being planned by ministers.

Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the House, said she wanted to revive the long-forgotten committee of the regions as part of the political settlement at Westminster. It is likely to start meeting in the summer once the new bodies in Edinburgh and Cardiff assume their powers.

The aim would be to give English MPs a parliamentary body from which their Scottish and Welsh counterparts are excluded, amid fears about *the strains that the devolution* programme is set to impose on Westminster.

Ministers are concerned that continuing to allow Scottish and Welsh MPs voting on purely English legislation — the so-called West Lothian question — will look increasingly *anachronistic* once the Edinburgh parliament and Cardiff assembly are a reality.

Although the proposed committee will carry no powers of legislation or scrutiny, and risks being labelled little more than a talking shop, ministers hope it will provide a forum where issues affecting the English regions can be discussed. MPs could use it to debate a spate of factory closures in one part of the country, for instance.

They would also have the power to call ministers before them, much like the Scottish and Welsh grand committees and other select committees. One option would see it travelling around the country to debate issues of concern to particular regions.

Mrs Beckett disclosed the plan last night, announcing that she was recommending the move to Parliament's modernisation committee. One issue to be decided would be whether to open membership to all English MPs, or to nominate members, weighting each party's presence according to their parliementary strength.

The committee on the English regions last met in 1978, but its powers still remain in parliamentary standing orders.

Earlier this year, the Tories floated the idea of balancing the Government's devolution package by turning Westminster into an "English parliament" for parts of the week. However, William Hague has since dropped the idea.

The Liberal Democrats welcomed the move as a "significant step in the right direction", although questioned whether it would have enough powers to give it any clout. Nick Harvey, the party's spokesman on the regions, said that the committee's revival would begin to answer the West Lothian question by defining areas of parliamentary business which were exclusively English. "However, there is no substitute for devolving real power to regional assemblies across England," he said.

Mrs Beckett said her proposals would be put before the modernisation committee within "a week or so".

She said: "We are keen to recognise the need to take account of the regional dimension in England and conscious of the view in many parts of the House that the interest of the English regions have to some extent been overlooked of recent years."

All English MPs could sit on the body but there had to be a quorum of six. Meetings lasted for a maximum of two and a half hours long, after which the committee would report on its conclusions to the Commons.



Alison Hale and Christine Clunie, who took redundancy because new shifts would stop them caring for their children

Landmark ruling for mothers

By Simon de Bruxelles

TWO nurses won a landmark victory yesterday when an employment tribunal ruled that a new hospital shift system discriminated against working mothers.

Christine Clunie and Alison Hale worked for ten years on the night shift at their local hospital. Their 12-hour shifts ended at 8am, leaving them just enough time to get home, feed and dress their young children and take them to school.

But their lives became unmanageable when Wiltshire Healthcare NHS Trust brought in rotating shifts as a cost-saving measure. The rota meant that they would have to work morning, evening and night shifts, making it virtually impossible to arrange childcare.

A month before the changes were introduced last July at the hospital in Melksham, Wiltshire, they were forced to accept redundancy.

Colin Sara, chairman of the tribunal in Bristol, said yesterday that the trust was wrong to introduce the new shifts without taking account of the effect on nurses with families. "Their decision to introduce compulsory rotating shifts for all nursing staff, both qualified and unqualified, without any allowance for childcare responsibilities was not justififable."

The Royal College of Nursing was "absolutely delighted" with the ruling and said that if hospital trusts ignored the tribunal findings they could be faced with a flood of discrimination claims.

Jo Stockley, a spokeswoman, said: "By *not following government* policy on family friendly shift patterns, the trust lost two dedicated nurses with a combined experience of nearly 30 years. Given that the NHS is experiencing the worst nurse shortage crisis in 25 years this is clearly ludicrous."

After the ruling Mrs Clunie, who has three young children, said: "When I lost my job it was a terrible upheaval. It was a very traumatic and difficult time for us. I felt as if our trust was not caring for us nurses even though it is supposed to be a caring profession.

"They did not seem to want to give us a chance to look after our children. If I had stayed at the hospital to work these shifts imposed on me I would not have been there for my family when they needed me."

Mrs Hale, 34, a mother of two, said: "We hope this will help other nurses to lead a normal family life as well as doing a job they enjoy."

During the three-day hearing Mrs Clunie accused trust bosses of having "no idea". She said: "I explained that it would be extremely difficult to work day duty due to childcare arrangements and impossible to work weekends as childminders don't work then.

"They did not seem to have any idea about *childminding* fees and retainer fees which have to be paid.

"My husband Stephen can take the children to school in an emergency but this results in the late opening of his fishing tackle shop as school gates do not open until 8.50am."

Mrs Hale said that her husband, who owns a garage, worked from 8am until 7pm to 10pm, seven days a week, and operates a 24-hour recovery service which prevented him from looking after the children.

A spokeswoman for the trust said that it would consider an appeal against the ruling. "Wiltshire Healthcare NHS Trust is very disappointed about the tribunal's decision. We have always striven to balance our obligations to provide quality care for hospital patients with the individual needs and commitments of our staff. This is a very complex case and we are now considering our options."

Mrs Clunie now stacks shelves in a supermarket and works one night a week at a private nursing home. Mrs Hale is a medical assessor for insurance companies. Compensation will be decided later.

Watchdog 'will not investigate ministers'

By James Landale
Political Correspondent

MINISTERS facing allegations of sleaze and financial wrongdoing should not be investigated by the parliamentary watchdog, the Government said yesterday.

Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the Commons, *said that it* would be wrong to extend the role of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to cover ministers as well as MPs.

Elizabeth Filkin, the new commissioner, suggested last month that her office would be prepared to look at the affairs of MPs in ministerial positions.

But when Mrs Beckett was asked in the Commons if the Government would accept this offer, she said: "I am not myself persuaded *that it is quite* the right way to handle these matters for the Parliamentary Commissioner to take on this particular role."

Ministers are instead understood to be actively considering setting up a new independent "ethics commissioner" to *investigate ministers facing* allegations of wrongdoing. He or she would not be part of the Civil Service and would be better placed to subject ministers to tough questioning.

In the wake of the resignations of Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson, several ministers have privately expressed concern at current procedures for investigating allegations. At the moment, the Prime Minister tends to ask the Cabinet Secretary to look into the accusations and report back to him. But in the past this has proved ineffective.

As the parliamentary watchdog, Ms Filkin investigates allegations against MPs and their compliance with the Register of Members' Interests. If *her remit was extended*, she could ensure that ministers comply with the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

In reply to a question from Julie Kirkbride, Tory MP for Bromsgrove, Mrs Beckett said that the issue was being looked at by the Committee on *Standards in Public Life*, chaired by Lord Neill of Bladen, but that there was "no need to come to knee-jerk and immediate views".

Cash incentive for education zones

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

PARENTS' groups and *private firms will be offered up to* £20,000 of government money to help to prepare plans to run schools in areas where local authorities have failed to raise standards, *Tony Blair will* announce today.

Ministers are known to be disappointed that the first education action zones — which they hoped would be a "test-bed for innovation" — were not more radical. The first 25 zones, half of which came into existence *this month*, are almost all run by local education authorities, although some are chaired by businessmen.

A second round of bidding *for government grants of* £750,000 a year will offer incentives for parents, community groups, firms and schools to develop their own plans. The *Department for Education* and Employment will encourage private bids through newspaper advertisements and provide civil servants to help to frame the proposals.

Mr Blair and David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, will launch the new bidding round this morning in Blackburn, where one of the first zones was based. The second phase will double the number of *zones, as long as suitable bids* are received. Most will start in the new school year.

Mr Blunkett writes in *The Times* today that he expects *most successful bids* to represent local partnerships.

Education, pages 42 and 43

Clinton

Continued from page 1

twice, but repeatedly" in a "multi-faceted" attempt to subvert justice. The House accuses Mr Clinton of giving "false and perjurious statements" in the Paula Jones sexual harassment *case or before* a federal grand jury, and that he made "corrupt efforts to impede the discovery of witnesses".

Mr Sensenbrenner argued that the framers of the US Constitution had rejected the British principle "that the king can do no wrong". Under the fundamental American notion that "no man is above the law", he said, "even the President of the United States has no licence to lie under oath".

"*For the sake of our country*, the Senate must not fail," he concluded, after nearly an hour. "It is truly sad when the leader of the greatest nation of *the world gets caught up in* criminal acts, where one act leads to another and another and another."

Whelan admits spin-doctors' sin

By Roland Watson, Political Correspondent

CHARLIE WHELAN *confessed yesterday that his job as* Gordon Brown's spin-doctor required an elastic interpretation of the facts.

Speaking publicly for the *first time since* resigning, Mr Whelan conceded that one element of the spin-doctors' art was to mislead. "That goes on," he said after being accused of planting stories which he later denied.

He praised Peter Mandelson — despite the behind-the-scenes power battle the pair have fought for years — as a "brilliant strategist" that he respected and admired.

But Mr Whelan had little *cheer to offer those* Labour MPs who have been calling for an end to the party's reliance on spin-doctors. He said they were a "necessity" *without which parties could not* operate.

Mr Whelan, who is to take up a job co-hosting a BBC Radio 5 Live chat show in April, resigned as part of fallout from the £373,000 home loan to Mr Mandelson from Geoffrey Robinson. He firmly denied he was the source of the leak which eventually cost both ministers and him their jobs, despite being "fingered" by friends of Mr Mandelson.

He instead used an interview on BBC Radio 4's World At One to mark his departure from the Treasury to try to heal some of the wounds between *the Blair* and Brown camps at Westminster which have bedevilled Labour's senior ranks for years.

Farmers to pay for BSE inspections

By Michael Hornsby
Agriculture Correspondent

FARMERS were told yesterday that the Government would no longer pay the cost of enforcing controls against "mad cow" disease in slaughterhouses and meat-cutting plants. The costs are likely to be passed on to farmers.

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, said plants licensed to handle cattle and *sheep* carcasses would have to start paying for their daily inspection by vets and meat hygiene officials from March 29.

Up to now the cost of inspections has been met by the taxpayer. *It is estimated* that in the first year of the new system the Government will recover £21.5 million from the industry.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drug dealers 'at school'

Up to one senior pupil in twelve at the Haverstock School, in Camden, North London, was found to be dealing in drugs by a survey used to support a bid for a government grant to fight drug-related crime. More than half of the 15 and 16-year-olds said they had been offered drugs, although the 1996 survey did *not establish whether the approaches were made at school.*

Ruling in MP's favour

Bruce George, the Labour MP for Walsall South, did not unfairly dismiss his constituency secretary, an employment tribunal in Birmingham ruled. The hearing had been told that Mr George dismissed Bridget Benton after she refused to work in an office that she claimed was a "death-trap".

Man held over 1994 killing

Anthony Diedrick, 39, a computer programmer, is to appear before West London magistrates today, accused of the murder of Dr Joan Francisco, 27, who was found battered and strangled with a vacuum cleaner flex on Boxing Day 1994.

Action Man goes to auction

A collection of Action Man toys, the first doll for boys, is to be sold at Christie's next month. They are expected to fetch between £200 and £300 each. But at least one of the figures — a boxed 17th/21st Lancers cavalryman — could raise over £700.



Pope challenges old image of God as a patriarch

BY RICHARD OWEN AND RUTH GLEDHILL

IN THE face of artistic images from Michelangelo to Blake, the Pope yesterday spoke out against "patriarchal" images of God, declaring that the Deity is "not to be imagined as an old man with a flowing white beard".

The Pontiff did not suggest how God should be pictured, and stopped short of saying that the Divine Being was female. However, his comments immediately reopened the debate on the nature of God and whether God can be seen as feminine.

One leading theologian said that the Pope's comments had implications on both the question of the ordination of women and married priests in the Roman Catholic church. The subject of God's nature is now thought likely to come up when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has a private audience with the Pope at the Vatican next month.

The Pope, who has increasingly revised theological doctrine over 20 years, said that it was wrong to "to imagine the Divinity with anthropomorphic traits which reflect too much the human world". Quoting from Homer, the Pontiff said the that popular Old Testament image of God derived not from Christianity but from the ancient Greek myth of Zeus, chief of the gods on Mount Olympus, who was seen as alternately benevolent and prone to vengeance and anger. Speaking to pilgrims at St Peter's on the theme of "God the Father", the Pope noted that both Judaism and Islam regarded attempts to depict God and give him form as "idolatrous". St Paul had written that God was perceived by humankind "through a glass, darkly", and would be seen "face to face" only after death.

But the Pope also observed, with apparent approval, that there was a "long and universal tradition of religious literature" in which God was seen as a "father figure". This was a reflection of Jesus's status as the Son of God.

Vatican officials said that the Pope was "responding to modern feminist critiques" which wrongly dismissed Christianity as "patriarchal". But the newspaper *La Repubblica* said that the Pope's predecessor, John Paul I, had been "more courageous" during his three-week reign in 1978, when he told astonished visitors that God had a "feminine nature" and was "more of a mother than a father". The present Pope had resisted the advancement of women in the modern church, the paper said.

Monsignor Gianfranco Ravasi, head of the Ambrosian Library in Milan and a leading biblical scholar, said that there was no description of God in the Bible, and that Greek and Hebrew words for God meant "spirit" or "power". "The name Jehovah, for example, which means the origin of being, or the one from whom all existence derives, was considered too sacred even to be uttered," Monsignor Ravasi said.



The Pope: stopped short of saying God is female

Professor Claudio Strinati, Superintendent of Fine Arts in Rome, said that the image of a bearded, paternal God derived not only from Zeus but also from the assumption by medieval and Renaissance painters that the father of Jesus "must have looked something like him only older".

Jesus had been depicted from Byzantine times onwards as a stern, imposing man with long hair and beard, Professor Strinati said. But he also pointed out that Caravaggio, one of the greatest of late Renaissance painters, had been more subtle, implying the presence of God as a universal force "through the use of light", an idea taken up in films and other modern media.

The Pope has raised eyebrows several times in recent months by reinterpeting accepted doctrine. He noted that there was "no evidence" that Jesus had been born at Christmas, a symbolic date which he said was in reality a Christianisation of ancient Roman midwinter festivals celebrating the coming rebirth of the Sun. He also declared recently that the Virgin Mary had been the first to see the resurrected Christ, even though St Mark's Gospel clearly states that Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive at the tomb.

According to Dr Carey, the Bible uses both male and female images to describe God. The Book of Genesis states that God "created human beings in his own image", and records that Adam and Eve "heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in the garden at the time of the evening breeze". In his great ceiling frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo depicts a long, bearded, paternal God creating Eve from Adam's rib, and transferring spiritual and intellectual power to Man through his outstretched finger.

Dr Carey, in a recent sermon at Telford, conceded that fatherhood is more common in biblical images of God. But he said female images also occurred and "God transcends and includes both categories."

The Pope's comments were welcomed by Hans Kung, a leading Roman Catholic theologian, as showing a "slow, modest process to enlightenment". Professor Kung, a theologian at Tubingen university in Germany and president of the new Global Ethic Foundation, said he would have preferred it if the Pope had gone further and said that God was mother as well as father.

Professor Kung, who had his teaching licence removed in 1979 by the Pope for questioning Papal infallibility, said: "What we should say quite clearly is that God transcends the sexes."

John Wilkins, editor of *The Tablet*, a Catholic weekly, said: "The Pope has decided that this year, the last year before the millennium, is officially the year of God the Father. Previously we have had the years of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Not many Catholics think of God as an old man with a flowing white beard. God is love."

The Right Rev Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, bishop of Arundel and Brighton, said: "God is beyond our understanding, or He would not be God. We only reach understanding of Him because he has revealed himself through Christ. Faith is not contemplating images of God. Faith is God taking hold of us. An image is meant to reveal something beyond it, whether that is God the Father, Son or Holy Spirit."

Tom Horwood, of the Catholic Media Office, said: "We were taught at primary school that God is not a distant character with a flowing beard. That is just an artistic representation. But God is many things. We learn from the Bible that God is present in His creation and that means He is around us in the world."

Dr Stephen Sykes, Bishop of Ely and a leading Church of England's theologians, said: "I am bound to welcome this statement of the Pope's. Nobody intelligent thinks that Christians believe God is a man in the sky with a long white beard, but it is quite difficult to get to a satisfactory brief articulation of God."

From Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: Renaissance image was "like Jesus but older"



BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

William Blake's view in The Ancient of Days: the Pope blamed Zeus for some Old Testament inspirations

Payout for squirrel damage

BY ALEX O'CONNELL

THE insurance company that refused to compensate the couple whose home was wrecked by a squirrel had a change of heart last night.

Desmond and Veronica Green, from Shrewsbury, Shropshire, had faced a bill of more than £5,000 for broken ornaments, damaged carpets and gnawed window frames. Saga Insurance had initially decided that the squirrel, which is thought to have entered through a chimney, was classified as vermin and, therefore not covered by the policy.

But Mr Green, 71, said that he was "delighted and relieved" after hearing that the company had relented. The retired engineer said that the main damage caused by the squirrel was to five window frames it nibbled on while he and his wife were on a three-day visit to see their daughter in London last September.

Kevin Brennan, Saga's operations director, said that it was a particularly difficult case because they did not know what species of squirrel had caused the damage.

"A grey squirrel is [vermin] and a red squirrel is not," he said. "I would imagine that it was a grey one that caused the damage because they are more common in England."

Jealousy 'drove dog to kill sleeping infant'

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

JEALOUSY may have driven a pet dog to kill a 12-week-old baby girl, an inquest was told yesterday.

Ann Jones told the inquest that she found the body of her daughter, Carly, on the floor of her living room last July. She had been savaged in her crib by the family's German shepherd, bought five years earlier when the couple despaired of having a baby.

The girl's father, Marshall, was asleep a couch in the same room, and only woke when he heard his wife scream.

In a statement, Mrs Jones, 40 said that the family had owned the dog, Data, for five years. "He was kind, friendly, obedient and never had a fight with another dog. He was even afraid of the neighbour's Pekinese," she said.



Carly Jones: was savaged while her parents slept

The inquest had been told that Mrs Jones had sought advice about whether the dog could become jealous after Carly was born, but Mrs Jones said that Data had shown "nothing but kindness" towards the baby.

"He was always obedient and loved Carly. When I handed Carly to a neighbour once the dog cried with worry," she said. The dog was put down after the attack at the family's home in Caerphilly, south Wales.

Recording a verdict of accidental death, the Gwent coroner, David Bowen, said that the couple had the right thing by seeking advice on whether the dog posed a danger to the baby.

"No criticism is justified or necessary against the parents," he said. "It's easy with hindsight to say this can be anticipated, but ... nothing in the dog's behaviour gave them cause for concern."

Son hopes to return gift of life

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A BOY aged 12 is to donate bone marrow to his mother, who is seriously ill with a rare form of leukaemia.

Christine Bradley's only chance of survival is a bone marrow transplant and her son Martin has provided a perfect match. Later this month he will go into hospital where surgeons will take a quantity of his marrow to transplant into his mother in an attempt to cure her.

Mrs Bradley, 41, said: "They initially tried to find a match with my sister but that failed so we suggested trying my sons, Martin and Paul. Amazingly they found that Martin was a perfect match. It's a big operation and I'm very nervous but Martin is just fine."

The leukaemia was diagnosed in 1993. Mrs Bradley, from Doncaster, said her doctors told her that she was one of only 17 in the world to have the rare strain. Two years ago she was admitted to a London hospital for a marrow transplant and was told that the leukaemia had vanished, but it has returned.

Yesterday Martin said: "I don't mind going into hospital and I will do anything to help her get better. I just hope I am fit enough to play for my football team afterwards."

Brighton councillor defects to SNP

BY JASON ALLARDYCE, SCOTTISH POLITICAL REPORTER

A LABOUR councillor has raised the spirit of *Braveheart* in East Sussex by defecting to the Scottish National Party.

James McGinley will now represent the ward of Brunswick and Adelaide on Brighton and Hove Council for a party not known for its territorial ambitions in southeast England.

Mr McGinley, 45, who made his first appearance as an SNP councillor in the chambers yesterday, explained: "I went up to Kirkcaldy, where I come from, at Christmas and the New Year.

"All my old comrades from the Labour Party had left and joined the SNP en masse because they are genuine socialists. The SNP was the only left-of-centre party I could join. I looked at the Tories and the Lib Dems and chose the third way."

The councillor, who left Scotland to become a teacher in Brighton in 1987, said he had grown disillusioned with new Labour since becoming a councillor three years ago. The final straw, after 25 years in the party, was the plan to introduce mayors in England, which he claimed was an attack on local democracy.

Mr McGinley, who is considering contesting his local council elections this year for the SNP, added: "I will say to the people of Brighton and Hove: 'Look, there is a left-of-centre party here and we don't have any others just now.'

"People in the pub have told me my defection was as surreal as new Labour!"

His appearance in the chambers yesterday was greeted with laughter. The Labour leader of the council, Lord Bassam of Brighton, said Mr McGinley had left because he had failed to be reselected to contest this year's elections. He said: "The party did not have confidence in him carrying out his duties to serve the best interests of the public. There will be some concern among voters that someone they elected as a Labour councillor has decided to put their politics somewhere else in such an eccentric fashion."

But the SNP toasted Mr McGinley, who has been sent a membership form. A spokesman said: "We are sure the people of Brighton will give a warm welcome to a man of such obvious independence. From Brighton to Banff people are seeing through new Labour, and in Scotland and beyond they like what they hear from the SNP."

Briton found after 22 days in jungle

Ex-soldier trying to forget his past was abandoned by guide. Roger Maynard and Simon De Bruxelles report

A FORMER soldier who travelled halfway around the world to escape his guilt at having killed two people in a road accident has survived 22 days lost in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.

Clive Sutton, 30, was abandoned by his guide on the first day of a trek along the treacherous 150-mile Kokoda Trail during the rainy season. For three weeks he stumbled about in the rainforest surviving on dried noodles and food foraged from the forest floor.

Mr Sutton, from Keynsham, near Bristol, had been travelling the world since his release from prison for causing the deaths of a young mother and a rugby player in the early hours of Christmas Day seven years ago.

Sutton, then serving with the Royal Engineers, was jailed for four years in 1993 after Bristol Crown Court was told that he was twice over the drink-drive limit and was speeding without headlights on when he hit a kerb and ploughed into a group of party-goers waiting for a taxi. He was discharged from the Army after his conviction.

Last night his father Michael Sutton, 66, said: "Clive just wanted to get away. He was living a nightmare. He was a changed man when he came out of prison and wanted to start a new life for himself. This is the last thing he needed."

Mr Sutton's emaciated figure was spotted by a local villager lying on a creek bed. He alerted a remote Salvation Army medical base which radioed for emergency assistance.

After a gruelling rescue he was yesterday recovering in hospital in Cairns, northern Queensland, Australia. Doctors said that he was in a stable condition after an operation on a gangrenous leg. He is also suffering from severe dehydration and suspected malaria. His survival in the most inhospitable terrain and weather amazed rescuers.

A team of five Australian soldiers, including a doctor and a Vietnam veteran, chartered a helicopter to reach the isolated region near the upper Goldie River. They then had to hike through nearly three miles of thick jungle to reach him.

But the drama was far from over. Rescuers had to use a makeshift stretcher to get Mr Sutton back to where the helicopter had landed. "They made an improvised stretcher and basically dragged him most of the way," Meikie Flach, Australia's consul in Papua New Guinea, said.

By the time they returned the helicopter, which was not fitted with night navigational aids, had been forced to return to the capital, Port Moresby, forcing them to stay another night in the jungle.

The Foreign Office advises travellers to Papua New Guinea of the "constant threat and danger" posed by the terrain and poor infrastructure.

Mr Sutton said that he began to worry about his son when he had not heard from him for about three weeks, and had been about to call the Foreign Office when officials rang him. His son made a brief call home after the rescue. Mr Sutton said: "He just said that he had been hurt and that he had had a rotten time. He said he had gangrene. Then the line went funny and we were cut off."

The Kokoda Trail was the scene of five months of hand-to-hand fighting between Australian and Japanese troops during the Second World War. An estimated 12,000 Japanese and 600 Australians were killed. Veterans of Kokoda still honour the Papuan bearers who carried sick and wounded Australians out of the jungle.

Today the mountain trail attracts trekkers from around the world who usually walk in organised groups arranged by tour operators.

Walks are discouraged at this time of year, which is the wet season in Papua New Guinea. Official advice to tourists warns: "It is a rugged, sometimes hazardous series of steep ridges and muddy gullies — one of the world's true adventure treks. The walk is not recommended during the wet season. It can be extremely slippery and the rivers are often too high to cross safely."

Mr Sutton admitted two charges of causing death by dangerous driving after his car ploughed into a taxi queue outside a rugby club. He had only passed his driving test a month before.

The two people who died in the crash were mother Sarah Monelle, 21, and graduate Richard Barnett, 24. A further nine people were injured.

Mr Sutton has been abroad for most of the time since his release from prison. Before going back-packing in Australia he worked in Spain for six months. He then spent six months on a building site in Sydney, saving enough for a diving expedition to the Great Barrier Reef. From there he set off for Papua New Guinea.

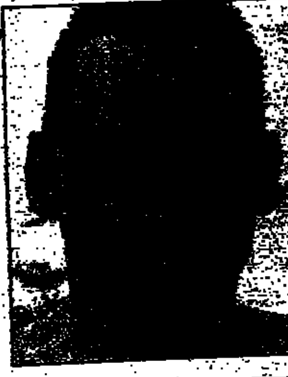
One of Sutton's victim's, Michael Bradley, 29, spent a month in hospital with chest, lung and liver injuries. Yesterday Mr Bradley, a company director who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, said: "I feel sorry for him. Being lost in the jungle for that length of time must have been horrible.

"It is bad enough for all the families affected, but I can't imagine what he must be going through."



Clive Sutton, who survived by eating dried noodles, is recovering in hospital in Australia after treatment for gangrene, dehydration and suspected malaria





Sarah Monelle and Richard Barnett, killed by Sutton in 1993

Arsonist traced by forgotten phone

By Paul Wilkinson

AN SAS soldier turned private detective realised that he had bungled his mission to burn down a football stadium when he discovered he had left his mobile telephone at the scene.

Alan Kristiansen told a court yesterday that when he returned to retrieve it, he found the Doncaster Rovers ground swarming with police and firemen. From that moment on the former infantry sergeant, who served with the SAS in the Far East, knew he was in trouble. When he rang home from a hotel, he told Sheffield Crown Court, a policewoman answered and asked him to stay where he was until he could be picked up.

Kristiansen, who is awaiting sentence for his part in the £100,000 blaze at the Belle Vue ground in South Yorkshire in June 1995, claims he was to receive £10,000 for his work. He said he was arrested before he could be paid.

He told the jury that Ken Richardson, a major shareholder in the ailing club, who lives on the Isle of Man, had asked him to burn down the ground. It was allegedly part of a plan to redevelop the ground so that it could also be used for pop concerts. Mr Richardson has denied conspiracy to commit arson.

Kristiansen said his arson attack started after he received the coded telephone message: "I have had nothing but bad press" from Mr Richardson. He had driven to the ground from his base on Tyneside with two other men and a woman. On the way they had picked up four cans of petrol. Armed with bolt cutters, they had got into the main stand, poured the fuel around and lit it. The stand had been well alight when firemen arrived.

He said that when he eventually contacted Mr Richardson he "ranted and raved", claiming that Kristiansen had lost him a deal and he would not be able to retrieve anything from it.

The trial continues.

Hollywood stars vie for theatre awards

By Dalya Alberge
Arts Correspondent

PERFORMANCES in the British theatre by two Hollywood stars have earned them nominations for this year's Olivier Awards.

Nicole Kidman is nominated as Best Actress for her erotic performance at the Donmar Warehouse in *The Blue Room*, David Hare's adaptation of Schnitzler's *La Ronde*. Kevin Spacey has been singled out in the Best Actor category for his spellbinding appearance in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* at the Almeida and in the transfer to the West End.

Trevor Nunn's revival of *Oklahoma!* at the Royal National Theatre, however, is out in front with nine nominations. With six nominations is *The Blue Room*, which moved to Broadway after its run at the Donmar. Kidman's co-star Iain Glen is among those vying with Spacey to be named Best Actor. The awards are announced next month.



Failure of child offender centre

An inspection found that Medway staff broke rules on restraint, reports **Richard Ford**



Social services inspectors said excessive force against children was used at the Medway Secure Training Centre

EXCESSIVE force was used to keep order at Britain's first secure institution for child offenders, an official report published yesterday says.

Wrist and neck locks were used to control offenders aged 12 to 14, and physical restraint was used by staff 150 times a month. Social services staff have investigated complaints by nine children at the Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent following the use of physical restraints but there have been no prosecutions.

The highly critical report by the social services inspectorate found that the centre, run by Rebound, a Group 4 subsidiary, was "facing a crisis", with child offenders subject to "excessive use of force" at the hands of inadequately trained staff.

Paul Boateng, the junior Home Office minister, would not accept any responsibility for the failings at the centre which was built and staffed to his department's specifications. He said: "There is no question other than that Rebound have failed to deliver on the contract. My staff and I will not tolerate further failure. Rebound recognise the serious failings of the past are quite unacceptable."

In spite of the report, the Government is to go ahead with building four more secure training centres and has awarded Rebound the contract for one in Northamptonshire.

The inspection team, which went to the Medway centre last autumn, reported: "We observed instances when wrist and neck locks were used in restraint. These methods have been criticised by the medical profession as being potentially injurious to young people whose bodies are still developing. These were also in contravention of the secure training centre rules," the report said.

On several occasions the use of restraints had led to injuries being sustained by the youngsters, who are held at the purpose built centre at a cost of £2,400 a week. Rebound claims that by November, the use of restraints had fallen by 60 per cent.

The report gave warning that the reliance on physical restraint, which was too often the primary means of control, was reinforcing their criminal tendencies. The inspection team found many instances where good order had broken down and youngsters behaving disruptively, leading to conflict with staff.

In an effort to deal with the difficulties among the 40 inmates, who are disturbed and persistent offenders, Rebound had drafted in a team from elsewhere in the Group 4 empire that soon became known as the "restraint squad".

Programmes to deal with offending behaviour had "simply failed" because of inadequately trained staff and poor control in the centre, which opened last April.

The report said the fears about security meant that trainees spent too long locked up and that parts of the buildings had been so badly vandalised that they were dangerous.

Although the report paid tribute to the motivation of the staff, it said that virtually none of them had previous qualifications and a significant majority lacked experience in working with children. Senior managers spent too much time "fire-fighting" problems.

Rebound is spending more than £150,000 repairing and replacing damaged facilities.

Additional staff are being drafted into the centre so that there will be three staff to every five young offenders rather than the previous two; the teaching staff has increased from nine to 12; three vocational supervisors have been hired; and a psychiatrist is at the centre for 2.5 days a week rather than only one, and a psychologist on site every day rather than one day a week.

The company said it accepted the criticisms in the report but had already implemented many of the 38 recommendations. A spokesman said: "As with any initiative we were learning from day one. We have adapted to the challenge posed by these difficult youngsters, but you cannot expect to change embedded behaviour overnight. It is far too early to judge Medway's success or failure".

Children act like hardened criminals

THE behaviour of a 13-year-old boy lounging in the dock during a recent court appearance highlighted the problems facing staff at the Medway Secure Training Centre. (Richard Ford writes).

Feet up during an adjournment, the boy shouted at a police officer: "What are you looking at?" The officer replied: "Nothing." The boy said: "Then don't stare at me," told him to shut up, called him a name and swore at him.

Some children at the centre come from families steeped in crime. One youth, being given career guidance, said he wanted to be an armed robber, like his father.

The average offender arriving at the centre since it opened in April had been before the courts on seven charges and had a similar number of previous convictions. Almost 50 per cent had been given a secure training order for burglary and theft, 27 per cent for aggravated taking away of a vehicle and 12 per cent for violence.

Students' jargon baffles council

By Helen Johnstone

A PLEA from Oxford students for better communications with city councillors failed to get the message across because the politicians found much of the nine-page document incomprehensible.

Members of Oxford City Council claimed that the text surpassed even their authority's capacity for gobbledegook.

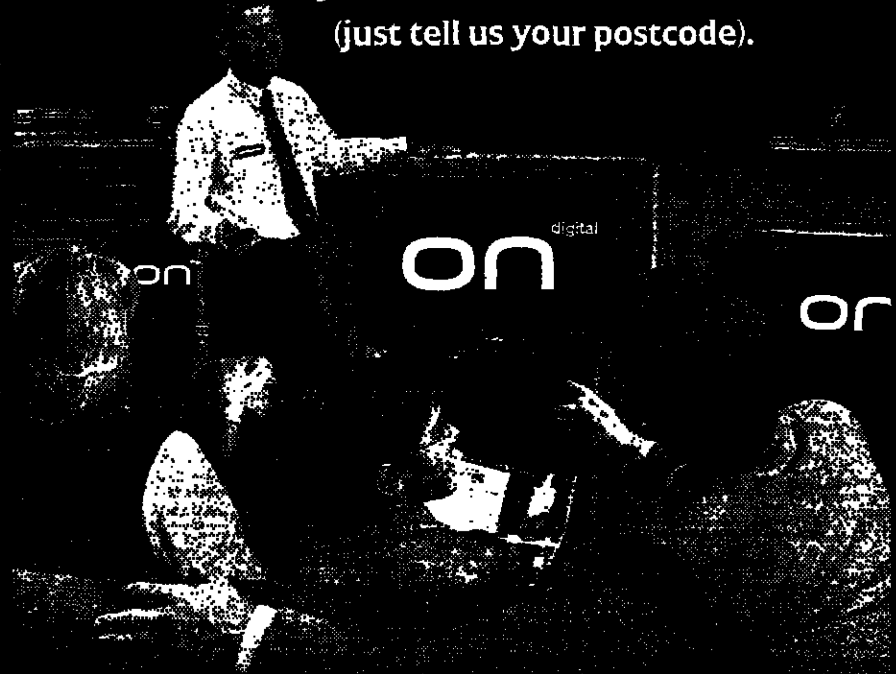
The aim of the request, from Josh Bell, president of Oxford's student union, and the vice-president, Rachel Hall, was a more active role in city affairs for students. But instead of stimulating debate, their management-speak left many politicians wondering what they were on about.

Ms Hall, who last year completed a masters degree in Oriental languages, suggested that she may have picked up some of the jargon from studying council documents. She said that councillors had focused on syntax not substance.

Under headings such as "Collaborative Dynamic, Process Determination and Actualization", the council was urged to improve its "functional participatory channels". Agreement would "necessitate the establishment of protocols which dictate the means and timing of co-option into the council dynamic". The student union, which is seeking non-voting roles on some committees, would, according to the report, "actualize this endeavour".

Will Cavendish, a councillor, suggested that the students may have been be trying too hard to show how clever they were. Alex Hollingsworth, another councillor, said: "I had to read the report three or four times before I understood it. In places it was more unintelligible than even our officials can produce. It quite cheered them up." John Tanner, council leader, said: "I had the advantage that I met two representatives of the student union who were able to explain to me what it all meant. The upshot is we are increasing representation of students on the council."















The middle is no longer in a class of its own, say pollsters

Mark Henderson and **Alexandra Frean** on the importance of finding just how the other half live

TONY BLAIR'S quest for the middle-class vote is too vague because the social group has grown so large it is no longer worth considering as a single entity, social commentators said yesterday.

The Prime Minister was right to identify aspirational voters as the key to another ten years in power, trend-watchers said, but the broad-brush approach to winning them over would no longer work.

Almost 50 per cent of Britons are now officially classified as middle class, an astonishing increase on the 33 per cent when Margaret Thatcher was elected 20 years ago. Robert Worcester, chairman of the polling organisation MORI, described the trend as the "biggest change in 1,000 years of English history".

This social revolution has led many to question the value of the term "middle class". Martin Hayward, director of consumer consultancy at the independent Henley Centre, said he no longer used the expression as it no longer defined anything.

"The phraseology Tony Blair is using is redundant," he said. "People do not have much in common as 'working class' or 'middle class' people any more — it is all so meaningless it is untrue."

He identified instead a "huge middle-class group" split into scores of sub-groups such as "Woking Man", the key group of suburban, southern voters with a working-class background but bourgeois aspirations who were targeted by Labour so successfully at the last election.

Woking Man is typically the first of his family to escape the working class, with a university or college education, a well-paid service sector job, a pension and a mortgage. He drives a Ford Mondeo, sends his children to a private, grammar or opted-out school and holidays regularly in expensive resorts. And until recently, he always voted Tory.

> 'The young singles living in lofts are very different to traditional home-county commuters'

He was first identified by Philip Gould, the Labour pollster who grew up in Woking and described the town as "the land that Labour forgot" in his history of new Labour, *The Unfinished Revolution*. Although the Woking constituency remained firmly Tory at the last election, Woking Man's cousins in Wimbledon, Hove, Harlow and Reading switched to Labour for the first time since the rise of Margaret Thatcher and won Tony Blair his landslide.

Peter Wallis of the consultants SRU, who as the commentator Peter York brought us the Sloane Ranger, also felt that Mr Blair would be wise to stay away from traditional notions of the middle class.

"We are looking at long-term trends in the West which have seen more and more people becoming more educated and working in the same kind of service-sector job," he said. "The social profile has altered so that the middle class is now in the majority, and it is hard to see it as a homogeneous whole.

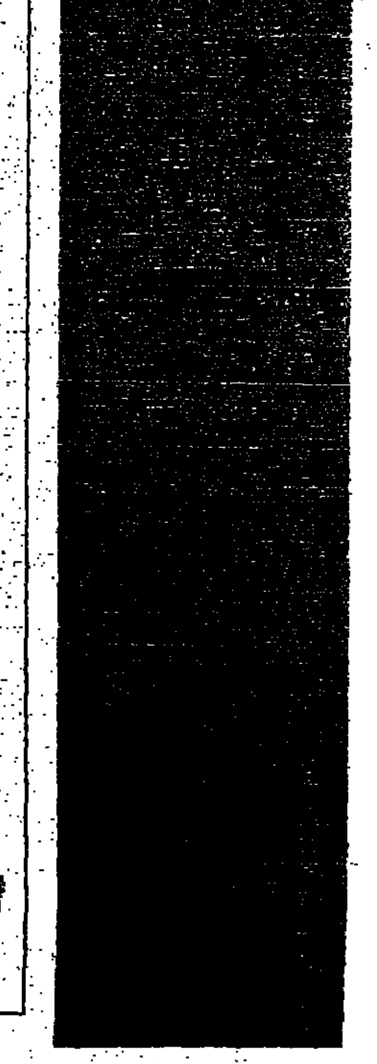
"Instead of a real middle class, there are lots and lots of affinity groups aligned horizontally — clusters of different kinds of people on the same socio-economic level. Young single people who live in lofts in Glasgow or Central London are very different to Woking Man and traditional home counties commuters. The middle class has become a rainbow coalition — very difficult to appeal to as a whole."

Woking Man is one of "millions of people with classic working class roots they don't recognise any more," he said. He no longer made "automatic choices" according to his class, and felt more able to vote Labour because of the changes brought in by Peter Mandelson.









Woking Man's habitat: identified by Philip Gould, left, he made *Changing Rooms* such a success for Carol Smillie

In search of the Surrey stereotype

BY ELIZABETH JUDGE

WOKING MAN is at a loss as to why he is seen as the embodiment of the burgeoning Labour middle class. On the streets of the Surrey town it is difficult to find the perfect match to the stereotype of the home-owning, Mondeo-driving, Conservative thinker. However, there are plenty of people in the town with aspirations.

Navid Sadrzadeh, 25, works in a shop in the Peacock Shopping Centre. He said: "I live in one of the most expensive parts of the country but I work in a shop. I don't count myself as middle class although I suppose I would like to be.

"I think Mr Blair is a bit of a hypocrite saying we are all going to be middle class because he's said before that he doesn't believe in a class system. I must admit that I have expensive taste and I would love a more luxurious lifestyle".

Jay Davidson, 28, has always lived in Woking. He is a debt collector and is single. He said that he would vote for Labour in the next election. "Woking is very idiosyncrantic. Everyone aspires to improve themselves. I would love to live an upper-class lifestyle. I think Blair is right to promote a new middle class. Everyone should be able to have opportunities in life. I intend to work myself up the ladder."

Vicky Coppins, 29, is Woking Woman. Married to Bob, 30, a fireman, they have lived in Woking for four years. She said: "Everyone always want to improve themselves. I see myself as middle class and I think most people in Woking probably do but I think Blair is wrong to try and make everyone become middle class. There will always be a class system. Of course I'd love to be upper class. I've always wanted to improve myself but I don't think it will work. I vote for the Conservative Party. I can't abide the way that Mr Blair preaches at people."

David Linford, 35, an engineer, lives and works in Woking. He doesn't think that people aspire to being middle class. "People just don't move up a class. It's not possible and it won't happen. I think people might earn more money and so move up financially, but not socially. Of course I'd like to be rich and if I won the lottery then that would be great. I vote for the Labour Party and I think Blair is doing a good job."

Philip Wade, 36, and his wife Andrea, 35, voted Labour for the first time in the last election. Mr Wade commutes to London each day while Mrs Wade stays at home to look after their children, aged two and three. "It seems silly to think that we would all vote the same way just because we live in Woking. I'm not even sure what we are supposed to be like but if it involves voting for the Tories then we don't fit. I think Tony Blair is doing a really good job and has got good leadership qualities."

Paul Richards, 34, and his wife Rosie appear to conform exactly to the Woking stereotype. He is an airline pilot and she does not work. she laughs at the idea of the Woking stereotype. "Maybe that used to be true but certainly it isn't any more. There are lots of different ethnic groups living here and I think more people would vote Labour now than vote for the Tory Party. That is a very old-fashioned view."

Leading article, page 23

Old Labour has no place in Blair's brave new world



Goodbye class war. Welcome to the all-embracing middle class. Tony Blair yesterday buried old Labour and its class warfare more directly than ever before. No wonder old Labour champions who trumpet their working-class roots feel so remote from him.

The Blair thesis, in his speech marking the tenth anniversary of the Institute for Public Policy Research, was partly a statement of demographic and psephological realities, even if in rather over-simplified terms. Britain is much more middle-class than it used to be — the category includes nearly half the adult population on the usual market research definitions, up from less than two-fifths in the 1970s.

Moreover, more middle-class people support Labour, or rather Blairite new Labour, than ever before. At the last election, 34 per cent of the middle classes backed Labour, against 39 per cent supporting the Tories. This is by far the narrowest gap on record, down from 30 points or more at the previous five general elections.

Nearly two-fifths of Labour's total support in 1997 came from the middle-classes, compared with less than fifth when the party narrowly won in 1974. Not only can Labour not win any longer without middle-class support but such backing is crucial to Mr Blair's power base.

But Mr Blair went further in attempting to reshape the political debate. His vision was not of working-class solidarity but of middle-class aspiration: "a middle class that will include millions of people who traditionally may see themselves as working class, but whose ambitions are far broader than those of their parents and grandparents". It is the politics of the ladder, not of redistribution. Instead of Labour Governments existing primarily to help the traditional working-classes by increasing social security benefits and council housing subsidies, Mr Blair wants to end such a world. The aim of welfare-to-work is take people off such benefits, which are chiefly for the unavoidably poor, old and disabled. This is reinforced by targeted measures to reduce social exclusion and help disadvantaged groups.

That analysis, set out in Philip Gould's *The Unfinished Revolution*, is rejected by old Labour which not only still thinks in terms of a clearly defined working class but also argues that the Blairite focus on the middle class risks ignoring the needs of the poor. The old Labour view is that the latter group, roughly a third of the population, can only be helped by greatly increased public spending and by higher taxes for the middle classes. The Blairites argue that not only would such policies spell electoral suicide, as they did from 1983 until 1992, but they also risk perpetuating dependency and poverty.

The new Labour approach also challenges the party's traditional defensive bastions such as local authorities and public sector unions. But will this drive to remake Labour as a party of the middle classes, however broadly defined, eventually lead to a split? So far, there has mainly just been rumbling from trade unions and the Left.

Potential flashpoints exist, such as welfare reform. But the main difficulties are more likely to be over political realignment, voting reform and relations with the Liberal Democrats, where Mr Blair is well ahead of much of his Cabinet, and party. Robin Cook is now likely to play a more active role here, particularly following the agreement by the Joint Cabinet Committee that the remit of consultations between Labour and the Lib Dems should be extended to European security, foreign and defence issues. Middle-class politics could mean a very different party system.

I won't go back, says man freed by kidnappers

Claudia Joseph on oil worker's promise to his wife

JOHN BROOKE, the oil worker kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen, arrived home yesterday and promised his wife that he would not return to the country where he had worked for 12 years.

After greeting her husband at Norwich airport, Katherine Brooke said: "I've had more conversations with God in the past few days than I have in a lifetime, but my prayers have been answered."

Mr Brooke, 46, who was held hostage for four days, declared that it was "wonderful" to be home. He said that he had been treated well by his kidnappers, and had never feared for his life, but would not be returning.

"If I was single I might go back but I'm not so I won't. I've made the decision and I've told Kathy I won't go back," he said. The engineer, who works for an American oil company, was kidnapped 11 days after four Western hostages were killed during a gun battle between the Yemeni military and Islamic extremists.

He had escaped a previous kidnap attempt, and yesterday said that he had always expected to return to his farmhouse at Hardley, near Norwich. He did not think his kidnappers were linked to Islamic extremists. "I was pretty sure it was not those type of people after being in Yemen for so many years. What I was worried about was that people at home would think it was related.

"One of the group's brothers, I think, had been arrested and they thought this was unfair. From their argument to me I thought he might have a case. But whether we would agree with that in the English court of law I don't know.

"I didn't think that I was in danger unless something happened that would make them do something foolish." Mrs Brooke, 45, who last saw her husband five weeks ago, learnt of his release in a call from the Foreign Office. Yesterday she said: "It seems a lifetime since I first heard that John was taken. There were times when I just wanted to scream the house down. I have not been able to sleep. I really have just paced the house and tried to be positive, but it's been very difficult."

Mr Brooke, who spent five weeks in Yemen and five weeks in England on rotation, was captured on Saturday in the guarded compound where he worked, 100 miles southeast of the capital Sanaa. He said: "I used to walk every afternoon around the camp on the inside of the fence. I was approached by a Bedouin and when I realised I wanted to get away from him he pulled a pistol. He grabbed me and by that time there were some others behind me.

> ‘I didn't think I was in danger unless something happened to make them do something foolish’

"I tried to escape but I was overpowered. There were nine of them. They were very nervous in the immediate vicinity of the kidnapping but when we got half an hour away they seemed to relax a bit."

Mr Brooke was driven for five hours to a village hideout near the border with Saudi Arabia, then moved into the desert. His captors, aged from 14 to 40, watched him in shifts. "The first two days we slept in a mud hut covered with blankets. The floor was hard but I was warm enough. The last couple of days they kept me moving every six or seven hours because they were a bit worried about being caught. We wrapped up in blankets at night and sat around the camp fire." Laughing, he added: "I'm not going camping again."

Mr Brooke survived on rice and boiled mutton until a package of supplies, including clothes, toiletries and food, was delivered on Tuesday.

The Times reported yesterday that he was released after a ransom deal with the Yemeni tribesmen, who had threatened to kill him if troops surrounding the hideout attempted a rescue. Yesterday a spokeswoman for Halliburton, his employer, said: "We can't say anything about how John was released. We have been working in the Middle East with the Foreign Office but his release was secured by the Yemeni Government."

Mr Brooke realised his release was imminent when one of the security guards from the oil compound arrived suddenly at the camp. He was flown by helicopter to the residence of the British Ambassador.

He hopes to continue working for Halliburton and is looking forward to watching his football team, Norwich City, play tomorrow. His first request after reaching freedom was for the result of Norwich's game against Crewe Alexandra on the day he was abducted.

His team lost 2-3, and yesterday he joked: "Luckily I didn't know the result of the game until after I was released." With understatement he added: "It was a bad day, Saturday, wasn't it?"



ADRIAN SHERRATT

John and Katherine Brooke reunited yesterday. "There were times when I just wanted to scream the house down," she said of his abduction

Yemen says that Briton trained for terror

By Daniel McGrory

SECURITY chiefs in Yemen claim that one of the Britons accused of plotting to bomb targets in Aden spent a month being trained by the self-confessed terrorist Abu Hassan, who was behind the kidnapping of 16 western tourists.

Malik Nasser Fadl Harhara, 28, is alleged to have confessed to collecting a car full of explosives and weapons from Hassan. He said that two other Britons detained in Aden also took part in the rendezvous. Mr Harhara, from Birmingham, is also said to have confessed that he was sent on the bombing mission by the London-based Supporters of Shariah.

His confession, revealed 22 days after his arrest, claims that the SOS sent $2000 in cash for Hassan to teach some of the Britons how to fire rifles and prime explosives at his camp 150 miles northeast of Aden. Hassan is also said to have provided them with rocket propelled grenades, automatic weapons and explosives.

At his trial this week, Hassan at first denied knowing the Britons when their names were read to him by *The Times*. He did not deny though that Britons had visited his camp. Legal authorities in Yemen are now debating whether to link Hassan's kidnap trial and the Aden bomb plot, which security chiefs say that he planned.

One security source said: "We believe this plot originated in London and want to know why the British Government allows such people to plan such outrages."

Mr Harhara is said to have told police that he and three others being questioned in Aden had attended a meeting in December with Abu Hamza al Masri, the Muslim cleric who leads the Supporters of Shariah, near London's Finsbury Park mosque. The confession does not say whether the bomb plot or any other terrorist operation was discussed at the meeting.

At least one other Briton being detained is said by security sources to have given a detailed confession about the plan to blow up a number of targets on Christmas Day including the British Consulate.

The Britons' lawyer, Salim Basunaid, said: "I do not know how these confessions were obtained. I still want the authorities to agree to a doctor to examine them to see if confessions were extracted under duress."

British diplomats are refusing to comment on the alleged confessions.

Al Masri last night denied sending Mr Harhara or any of the group to Yemen.

Doubt cast on cleric's claim

A RADICAL Muslim cleric's claims that 2,000 British Muslims travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan for military training each year yesterday drew criticism from the wider Islamic community (Stephen Farrell writes).

Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammed, whose North London mosque is at the centre of investigations into terrorist bomb plots in Yemen, was accused by moderates of exaggeration and using the kidnap of Westerners to gain publicity for himself. Zaki Badawi, principal of the Muslim College, in London, threw doubt on Sheikh Bakri's claims. "He is a crank and there is no evidence to support what he says. Military training used to happen when the Afghan jihad was going, indeed the British and American Governments encouraged it, but whether this is continuing is doubtful."

Ahmed Versi, Editor of *The Muslim News*, said Arab newspapers would have known if hundreds of youths were travelling abroad. "I think he is exaggerating."

Irvine criticised for seeking 'total control'

Fellow peers are concerned about the Lord Chancellor's reforms, reports Frances Gibb

THE Lord Chancellor's reform of the justice system has been attacked for what are described as the "almost untrammelled" powers he proposes for himself.

Lord Irvine of Lairg's Access to Justice Bill has been severely criticised in a report from the Lords' select committee that scrutinises proposed legislation.

The report, published yesterday, says that the committee of peers views "with considerable concern" the powers that the Lord Chancellor proposes to take in setting up a Legal Services Commission to run what is now the £1.6 billion legal aid scheme. It also expresses concern about the wide powers he proposes to take over the legal profession and its rules.

In the Bill, which has had its second reading, the Lord Chancellor would direct the Legal Services Commission in its running of the proposed Community Legal Service and Criminal Defence Service. Such directions are crucial to how the Commission runs the civil and criminal justice systems, the report says. "Yet the power of the Lord Chancellor to give directions is almost untrammelled. We view this with considerable concern."

The select committee of peers, chaired by Lord Alexander of Weedon, the chairman of the National Westminister Bank, goes on to express concern that the policy objectives and national principles are not set out in the Bill, nor does it contain criteria for how the Lord Chancellor should exercise his powers.

The peers point out that Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the previous Lord Chancellor, had said that such criteria should not be left to directions but should be part of primary legislation. They call for the powers to be circumscribed, and for principles that will govern the running of a new legal aid system to be written into the Bill.

The Bill should make clear that the aim of the Community Legal Service is to promote and enhance the opportunities for citizens to have access to justice, the report says. Otherwise, the Lord Chancellor could give directions "in the interests of financial stringency".

The report also criticises powers to be taken by the Lord Chancellor to give directions over the running of the new Criminal Defence Service.

As the State is a party in such cases, and a defendant's reputation and liberty are at stake, it "would be disturbing if a minister has an undefined power to change the arrangements for giving legal assistance to the impecunious defendant".

It suggests that the Bill be amended to ensure that defendants' rights are protected and that a person charged with a criminal offence would obtain financial help if needed. Any directions should be limited to administrative matters, the report says.

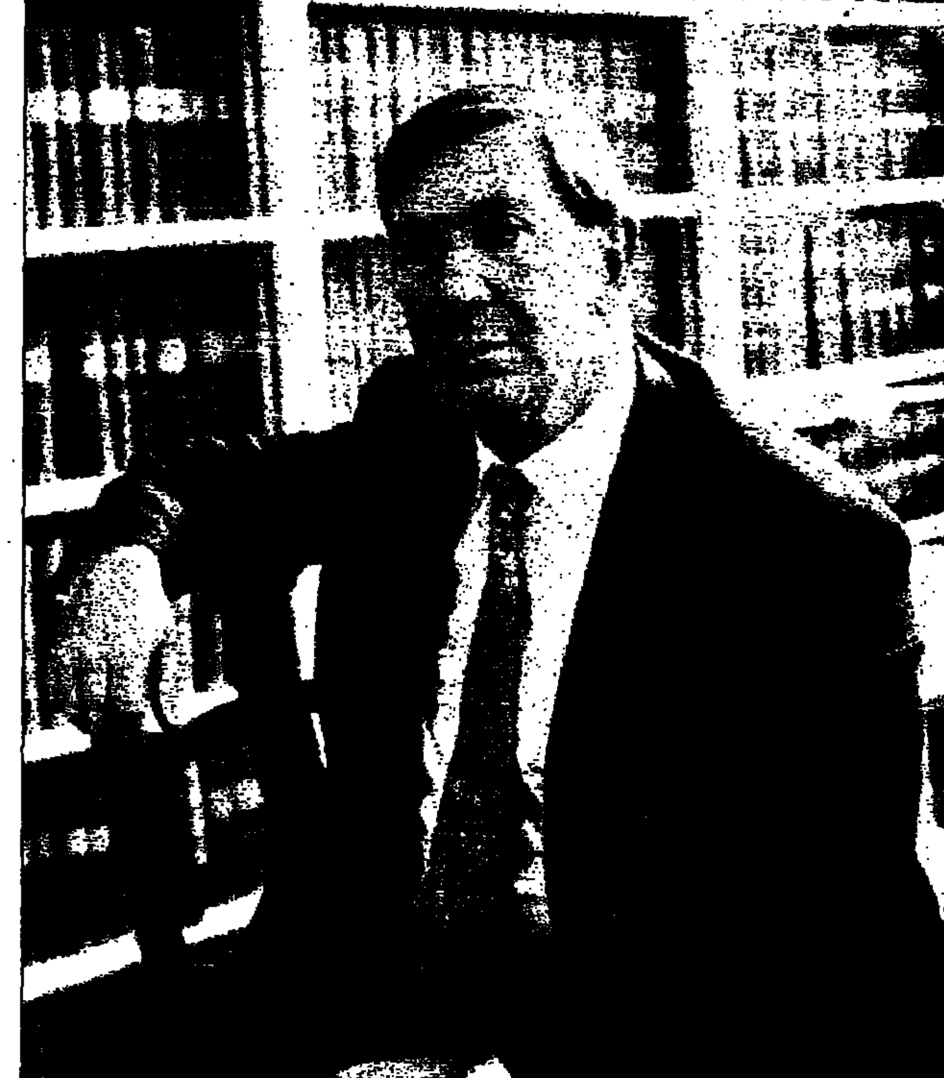
The report also has a swipe at the controversial powers taken by the Lord Chancellor over the legal profession. The Bill provides no indication as to how he would exercise such powers, it says. "There must be strong justification for requiring a professional body to change its own rules of conduct." It recommends that the Bill be amended to curb the proposed powers so that the Lord Chancellor could intervene only if the profession acted "unreasonably" over the granting of rights of audience; and also that the power be subject to the affirmative procedure in Parliament.

The criticisms will be seized on by the Bar and judges critical of the Bill. Vicki Chapman, policy director of the Legal Action Group, welcomed the report. "We hope now that the Lord Chancellor will amend the Bill so that where the Government wishes to have delegated powers, these should be exercised in regulations rather than directions." Such powers were a "wholly unnecessary circumvention of the legislative process," she said.

A spokesman for the Bar said: "This report bears out our fears that some of the proposed powers would be a change too far from a constitutional perspective.

"Lord Irvine's bid to assert statutory powers over an independent legal profession are at variance with the constitutional position."

SIMON WALKER



Lord Irvine of Lairg, whose Access to Justice Bill would give him wider powers

Prudence test to cut £1.6bn legal aid bill

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

NEW tests on who should obtain legal aid were announced yesterday to curb the £1.6 billion legal aid bill and stop taxpayers' money being wasted on weak claims.

In future, people will obtain public funds for civil litigation only if the case is one that a prudent person would spend his own money on.

People will be able to obtain funding for cases with a wider public interest: for instance, a test case that could establish liability for harm caused by a dangerous drug.

The new criteria will be applied within a capped or cost-controlled legal aid budget that will replace the present demand-led system.

In straightforward claims for damages, people must have a chance of success of 60-80 per cent and be must be expecting to recoup damages of at least three times the likely costs. If the chances of success are only 50-60 per cent, then they must be expecting to recoup damages of at least four times the cost.

Funding — no longer to be called legal aid — will not be supplied if a litigant could bring the claim on a "no win, no fee" basis. Nor will it be supplied, as a rule, if likely costs outweigh the expected damages.

Moreover, where cases on a no-win arrangement have very high investigative costs, these costs could qualify for public funding.

If a pressure group or a charity existed that could be expected to support a particular type of litigation, it might be asked to make a contribution.

Cases where costs are likely to be more than £50,000 will came out of a separate central budget. Contracts will be awarded to specific firms to run such cases.

The proposed tests were outlined by the Legal Aid Board, which will become a Legal Services Commission under the Government's proposed shake-up of the legal aid scheme.

Steve Orchard, chief executive of the Legal Aid Board, said that the new merits tests would allow public money to be spent where most needed. If too many cases qualified for the pool of money available, then the criteria — or funding code as it is called — would have to be adjusted, he said.

"The new code is rigorous, with tough cost versus benefit ratios. There must be high chances of success before public money is spent on litigation. But the code is also flexible and will let us apply different criteria to different types of cases."

In high priority cases, such as those concerning a child's welfare or having somewhere to live was at stake, less strict tests would be applied.

Lawrence family may sue retiring police officers

By Stewart Tendler
Crime Correspondent

POLICE officers who worked on the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation could face a legal action for negligence over the suffering caused to his family.

Yesterday the solicitor for the family said that he was considering an action after news that the only detective facing discipline charges is retiring. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that police can no longer claim immunity over investigations. The Lawrences might claim for distress suffered from the way they were treated and the ineptitude of investigations.

Imran Khan, their solicitor, said that he was looking at the possibility of an action for negligence against individual officers and the Metropolitan Police. He said that he would make a decision within days. Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday that Detective Inspector Ben Bullock, who faces seven internal charges of neglect of duty, was retiring.



Bullock: by retiring he may avoid charges

Inspector Bullock, 48, will leave early in April with a £25,600 annual pension. Both Scotland Yard and the Police Complaints Authority say that there may not be enough time to organise a disciplinary tribunal. Five more senior officers who would also have faced disciplinary hearings have already retired.

Inspector Bullock was second in charge of the investigation into the 1993 murder of Mr Lawrence in South London. Last year he was criticised at hearings before Sir William Macpherson for ignoring intelligence on five suspects. He has been told that he will face criticism in Sir William's report next month.

Yesterday Stephen Lawrence's mother, Doreen, said: "When my son was killed nobody was there to catch the killers and now when disciplinary action can be taken . . . he ups and retires and still gets his full pension. This just can't be allowed to happen."

Peter Moorhouse, chairman of the PCA, called for a new system, under which retiring officers would still face charges. Glen Smyth, of the Police Federation, said Mr Bullock had not been found guilty of any offence and was entitled to take his retirement.

Royal tours pay for £15m palace gallery revamp

BY MARCUS BINNEY AND ALAN HAMILTON

THE Queen has approved a major extension of the Buckingham Palace art gallery to quadruple the exhibition space for the Royal Collection, one of the largest assemblages of art in the world.

Costing £15 million and funded entirely from Royal tourist revenue, the rebuilding of the Queen's Gallery will be the largest building project at the palace for 75 years, and will give central London an important new gallery space.

The gallery, built from the ruins of the old palace chapel bombed during the Second World War, will close later this year and reopen in time for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. With the addition of space from around the palace kitchens, it will include a lecture theatre, a micro-gallery providing electronic access to most the collection's 500,000 works, and, for the first time within the palace precincts, a coffee shop.

The Queen backed the original opening of the gallery in 1962 to ensure that the collection she tends on behalf of the nation was sufficiently seen.

The spirit of John Nash, the favourite architect of George IV, lives again in the new designs. Gone is the hole-in-the-wall entrance to the present gallery, built to the designs of the Ministry of Works in 1962. In its place is an impish rotunda by the architect John Simpson, modelled on the tent that the Prince Regent erected in the gardens of Carlton House in celebration of Napoleon's exile to Elba in 1814.

The new galleries behind will display masterpieces from the Royal Collection alongside exhibitions of works by artists such as Leonardo, Canaletto, Van Dyck and Fabergé, which have attracted crowds in the past.

Simpson, a champion of the classical tradition, won the commission from five other architects. The architectural historian David Watkin, said: "Simpson has responded in an historically sensitive way to all the architects who have previously worked on the site. Simpson's designs are both inventive and practical."

The new Nash Gallery is shown in Simpson's drawings with the famous equestrian portrait of Charles I and his riding master by Van Dyck. The gallery will be open all year, ensuring visitors can always see a selection of the 5,000 pictures in the Royal Collection. Specialist galleries will show rotating displays of the 30,000 old master drawings in the collection and specially designed cabinets will show miniatures and gems.

The present Queen's Gallery was built in the shell of one of John Nash's conservatories overlooking the palace gardens. Later converted into a chapel and bombed during the war, it has blank walls that ensure that visitors have no idea where they are. One virtue of Simpson's design is that it provides views out over a part of the gardens.

Hugh Roberts, the director of the Royal Collection said: "I want to knock on the head the repeated suggestions that the Royal Collection should be displayed in some major new museum. Quite apart from the prestigious cost of such an operation, it would involve stripping Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and Osborne of numerous works of art, which more than 5 million people come to see every year."

The Royal Collection, a vast assemblage of pictures, prints, books, manuscripts, furniture, ceramics, silver and gold plate, arms and armour, gems, clocks, glass, sculpture and tapestries, is the last of its kind in Europe. Those of the Romanovs, the Bourbons, the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns have all become state-owned national collections.

The £15 million project will be funded by the profits of opening the palace's state apartments and the precincts of Windsor Castle to the public. Two thirds of the cost will come from admission charges and souvenir sales at the palace, which last year showed a profit of nearly £2 million. The remainder will come from Windsor, which last year produced a £4.7 million surplus. The palace was first opened to the public in 1993 to help to fund the restoration of the fire-damaged Windsor Castle.

The Royal Collection receives no direct public funding, but the royal palaces that house the bulk of it are maintained by a government grant, which last year amounted to £16.4 million.

Artist's impression of how the Nash Gallery will look



The architect John Simpson with a model of the new Buckingham Palace gallery. It will open in time for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002

Exhibition focuses on head of a king who eventually lost it

BY ALAN HAMILTON

ON JANUARY 20, 1649, King Charles I walked to the scaffold in Whitehall, where he lost his head for believing in the divine right of kings to reign without reference to Parliament. Three hundred and fifty years later, almost to the day, Buckingham Palace is opening an exhibition devoted exclusively to the Queen's unfortunate ancestor.

Dozens of images of Charles, in paintings and prints, on coins and medals, and from the banned books of Cromwell's Commonwealth, have been trawled from the huge resources of the Royal Collection and will go on display in the Queen's Gallery in the first exhibition devoted entirely to the portraiture of a single monarch.

Charles, immortalised by his goatee beard and Jimmy Hill chin, is one of the most instantly recognisable of all past monarchs, thanks to the flattering attentions of his brilliant court painter, Sir Anthony Van Dyck, who did for him what Holbein did for Henry VIII. In fact he was a pale, weedy youth of 5ft 4in whose portraits frequently show him on horseback to enhance his stature.

Jane Roberts, curator of prints at the Royal Collection, who has assembled the exhibition, said: "The formal, elegant portraits of Charles were all done during his period of personal rule when he abandoned Parliament. Yet he does not look in the least like a dictator — he is much too sensitive. But then all court painters flatter their subjects."

After the Restoration in 1660, there was a great upsurge of sentiment for Charles and dozens of prints and pamphlets were produced, many of them in Holland, where the best engravers were based. "The portraits show him as a Christ-like martyr, in the manner of an orthodox church religious icon," Mrs Roberts said.

However, it is the politically incorrect books and images published in England immediately after the king's execution that are likely to be the highlight of the exhibition. Within a week *The Portraiture Of His Sacred Majesty In His Solitudes And Sufferings* was rushed out, with a fold-out engraving showing the king discarding his earthly crown for a heavenly one, and accompanied by a text now accepted by scholars as having been largely written by Charles himself in his last weeks of imprisonment.

The publishers were imprisoned by Cromwellian zealots, but the book was such an enormous best-seller that they had to be released, whereupon they produced a miniature edition that Royalists could conceal and read without attracting attention. The book, widely known as the *Eikon Basiliske*, is Charles's justification for all he did, and his rejection of the charge of treason brought by Parliament on the ground that the king had declared war on his own country.

Also on display will be a copy of the historic *Act For the Abolishing Of The Kingly Office* of 1649, which interrupted the British monarchy for 11 years.

There are also several engravings of Cromwell, warts and all, on horseback. After 1660 the same engravings continued to be issued, but with Cromwell's head cleverly replaced by that of the man he beheaded. Most gruesome is a miniature portrait of the king, fashioned, it is claimed, from the hair of his beard, which was gathered by the artist shortly after the royal head was separated from its body.

There is unlikely to be a similar exhibition of prints and pictures from the Commonwealth era showing the Parliamentarian side. It is not because the Queen dislikes giving her exhibition space over to republican causes. According to Mrs Roberts, the Royalists had all the best artists and Cromwell's spin-doctors just could not draw.

☐ *The King's Head: Charles I, King and Martyr* (The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace; January 29 to May 3)



Detail from a Van Dyck portrait of Charles I

The IRA give up its arms? Forget it, says McGuinness

Sinn Fein's chief negotiator tells **Martin Fletcher** that there is no point in demands that cannot be met

THERE is "no prospect whatsoever" of the IRA surrendering arms to secure Sinn Fein's entry to Northern Ireland's government, Martin McGuinness declared yesterday.

Neither he nor Gerry Adams could deliver any weapons and there was "absolutely no point" in governments pressuring them because "it won't work", Sinn Fein's chief negotiator insisted.

David Trimble, Northern Ireland's First Minister, had no choice but to face down Unionist opponents of the Good Friday accord and establish an executive that included Sinn Fein, Mr McGuinness said in an interview. The alternative was the accord's collapse — a development that would produce "a most dangerous situation".

With the Government hoping to transfer powers to Northern Ireland's new assembly on March 10 the peace process is now entering its final act, and could yet be derailed. For five years the decommissioning issue has been fudged, but it can be avoided no longer. And as Mr McGuinness's remarks suggest, there is no solution in sight.

Mr Trimble insists that he cannot and will not establish an executive that includes Sinn Fein until the IRA shows its commitment to peaceful means through a downpayment of weaponry. He points to prisoner releases, troop withdrawals, creation of Chris Patten's commission on the future of the RUC, and the agreement last month on the nature of the executive and cross-border bodies. He says that republicans must now reciprocate.

Mr McGuinness is equally adamant that the accord sets no preconditions on Sinn Fein's admission to government beyond an electoral mandate. Interviewed in a Sinn Fein office in the heart of Londonderry's Bogside, Mr McGuinness sought to explain the IRA's intransigence. He spoke of continuing loyalist attacks, and of the implication that "the IRA alone are culpable for the events of the last 30 years". Above all, he claimed that Unionists and British "securocrats" were seeking the "humiliation and surrender" of the IRA that they had failed to achieve in 30 years of conflict. "There's nothing more guaranteed to ensure the IRA won't do something than demands by the British Government and Unionists," he said.

He insisted that Sinn Fein had made it abundantly clear to Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, during the Stormont peace talks that it could not deliver IRA disarmament, and the accord reflected that. The decommissioning section commits the parties only to using "any influence they may have" to achieve total disarmament within two years.

Mr McGuinness said that he was fulfilling Sinn Fein's obligations under the accord, but refused to expand. He would not say whether he had agreed mechanisms for disarmament with General John de Chastelain, the body's chairman. He would not discuss his dealings with the IRA or quantify his influence with that group.

He could not guarantee IRA disarmament even within two years. The key was "the removal of the causes of conflict". "People who say Sinn Fein should move beyond the provisions of the agreement are asking the impossible, particularly against the background of David Trimble's failure to implement the agreement."

He gave warning of "big trouble" if Mr Patten's commission failed to recommend RUC disbandment. "Any fair-minded reading [of the accord] shows Patten has to produce a policing service acceptable to both communities and that effectively means producing a new policing service."

Mr McGuinness rejected the consensus that Unionists will oust Mr Trimble if he abandons his demand for prior decommissioning. He claimed that they would lose all domestic and international support by doing so. The risk if Mr McGuinness is wrong is that a real hardliner would replace Mr Trimble and the chances of accommodation would vanish for a generation.

Mr McGuinness dodged when asked if the IRA ceasefire could collapse. He said Unionist stalling was "a source of serious concern and worry to us" because "everyone has to consider the reality that there are people who are going to do their damnedest and worst to destroy everything we have worked for".

But his gut instinct was that the process could not at this late stage be wrecked by "a silly and stupid demand for the IRA's surrender". Mr Trimble's position was untenable, and it would become increasingly clear that he had to establish the executive.

Was Mr Trimble not saying exactly the opposite — that the IRA would have to back down? "Yes," Mr McGuinness said. "But he's wrong."



Martin McGuinness, who says British "securocrats" want to humiliate the IRA

Police chief attacks TV view of city

By Russell Jenkins

THE Chief Constable of Merseyside yesterday criticised a fly-on-the-wall documentary about his force for reinforcing images of a crime-ridden Liverpool. Norman Bettison said that he supported openness with the media "but I think there is a difference between being open and showing your backside to the world".

He was particularly disappointed with outdated shots of urban degradation and the opening narration of the BBC series, *Mersey Blues*, which concentrated on high unemployment in a city where, according to the programme, "crime is practically a career choice for some".

Work on the series began in 1995 with the agreement of his predecessor, Sir James Sharples. The camera crew were given unprecedented access to follow officers fighting drug gangs and organised crime. Mr Bettison took over his job in November. The five-part series began on BBC2 on Wednesday and has already upset business leaders.

The first episode, *For the Queen*, showed officers investigating a drug network's money men, trailing a suspected heroin courier up the M6, and discussing the force's general lack of finance. The programme makers agreed to blank the faces of undercover officers after a meeting with Assistant Chief Constable Paul Stephenson. It is understood that officers were anxious to reduce the screen role of Detective Chief Inspector Elmore Davies, who will be seen in the last programme being jailed for corruption.

Mr Bettison said: "The thing that disappointed me was that the opening shots seemed to reinforce stereotypes of Merseyside. It showed degradation and deprivation, areas that have probably been developed since the programme was made."

He said the programme had recorded a "historical situation". The cameras were invited in against a backdrop of 23 shootings in a six-week period that had not been repeated. Recorded crime was now at its lowest for 18 years.

"Sir James Sharples was very keen to show to the world that his force was on top of the problem," Mr Bettison said. "That was the rationale. His judgment was probably right but unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, we are being shown this set of programmes four years later against a very different backdrop, where shootings have reduced to comparative levels with other urban environments.

"I would probably be happy to let people speak with individuals and senior officers that are responsible for the success. I wouldn't say, 'Bring your cameras, open every door, film what you want'. I came to Merseyside with a determination to offer two things to the media, openness and accessibility. I think there is a difference between being open and showing your backside to the world."



Bettison: unhappy about "stereotyped" portrayal

On the positive side, he thought that the first programme illustrated the dedication of officers, who often work unpaid overtime to complete operations in a climate of cuts in funding.

A business group, Mersey Partnership, is running a promotional campaign to counter the impact of the series on regional investment.

Jenny Crowther, the series producer, said: "We were not trying to say that everyone on Merseyside decides to become a criminal. We hope that the film would reflect the challenges Merseyside faced, which are similar to other urban forces."

Van driver 'burnt £500,000 Rubens'

By Helen Johnstone

AN ARSONIST caused more than £5 million of damage in about 30 fires, destroying a painting by Rubens and props from the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Starlight Express*, a court was told yesterday.

James Miles, a van driver, is accused of setting fire to three furniture removal vans, a bus, barns, warehouses and other property.

Ian Dixey, for the prosecution, told Winchester Crown Court that a series of arson attacks on property in Surrey, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset had been connected with Mr Miles, 35. "All of these fires were started by the defendant, a man we say is clearly obsessed with fire. Some of the fires appear motiveless, apart from the excitement the defendant appears to get from starting and watching them."

While Mr Miles was living with his father in Farnham, Surrey, there had been at least 24 fires near by. After he was arrested in connection with one of the fires, he was bailed to live at his mother's house in Bridport, Dorset. Mr Dixey said Mr Miles later confessed to causing £4 million pounds of damage, including the £500,000 Rubens, in a warehouse fire at Bridport.

Mr Miles denies arson and endangering life. The trial continues.

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New CJD test will warn of epidemic risk

Disease can now be identified while patients are still alive, reports Ian Murray

A TEST for the human version of mad cow disease that can be carried out on living people has been developed. It will lead to a screening programme to see whether Britain is facing an epidemic of the brain disease.

Until now it has been not possible to confirm a diagnosis of new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (nvCJD) until someone has died, when the brain can be examined. A common factor present has been a rogue prion protein.

Researchers have found that the protein is also present in organs such as the appendix and tonsils. By taking a biopsy from these it is therefore possible to find out if someone is infected with the disease long before any symptoms appear.

The test, developed by the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust, involves a minor operation to remove a piece of tonsil for analysis. The council, with funding from the Department of Health, is to carry out tests on at least two thousand tonsils over two years. If a significant proportion of these show the presence of the protein it will be a clear sign that there is a strong likelihood of an epidemic of nvCJD.

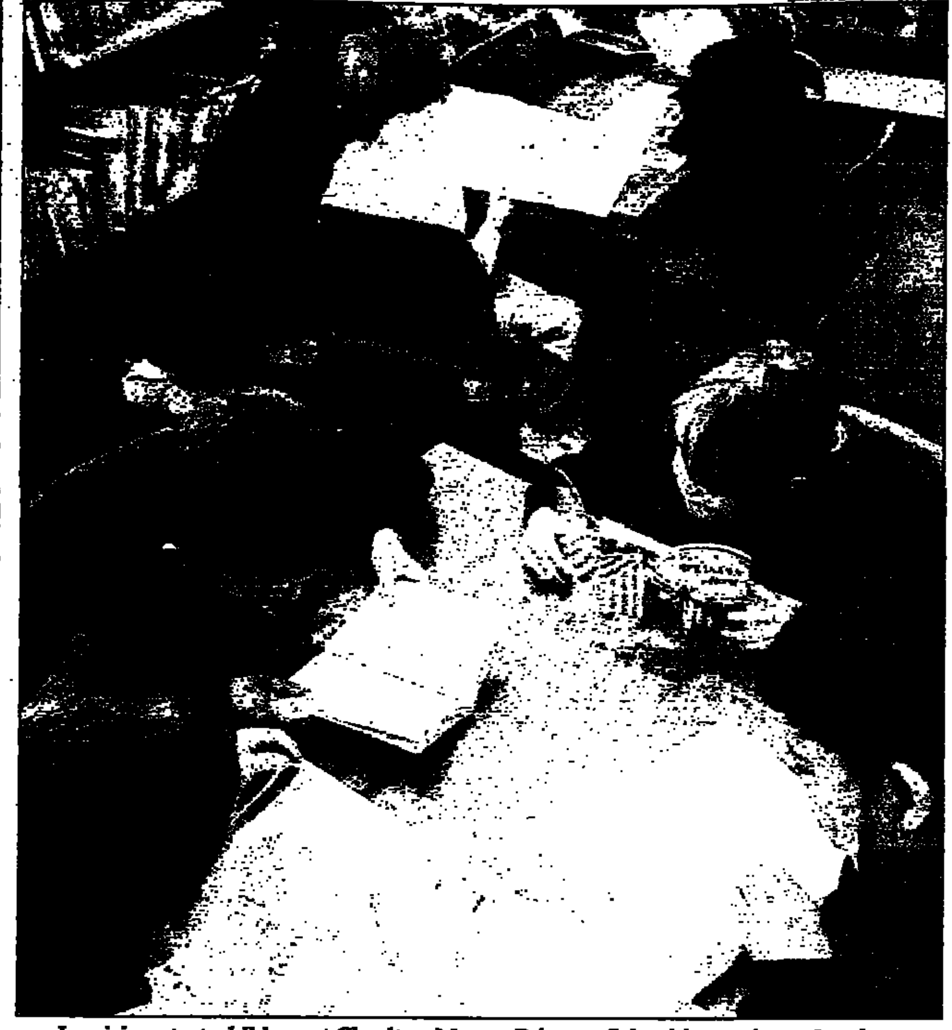
John Collinge, from St Mary's Hospital, West London, who is to head the new prion research unit, said: "It would be irresponsible not to do these studies and if numbers were significant we would need to do something urgently about it." If no tests were carried out and a large number of cases began to appear in four or five years time that would mean that four or five years of research would have been wasted.

"This offers the possibility that we could screen tonsils from the population to determine what proportion were carrying this rogue form of the prion," he said. "That would give us some idea of the prevalence of nvCJD.

The new tests will be carried out on only a tiny proportion of the 80,000 tonsils removed in Britain each year and Professor Collinge said that if the results were negative it would not prove conclusively that there was no danger of an epidemic.

About half of all tonsils removed are from children under nine who are unlikely to have eaten meat contaminated with BSE. Nobody will know if their tonsils are being examined and the researchers will have no clue to the patients' identity. Only if a substantial number are found to have the protein is it likely that further tests will be carried out.

The trial tests which showed conclusively that the prion protein could be found in the tonsil were carried out on 20 patients with what appeared to be early symptoms of CJD by a team from St Mary's. Their report of the trials in *The Lancet*, rushed into print today only four weeks after being submitted, reveals that nine of the 20 cases were found to have the protein and all subsequently developed nvCJD.



SIMON BROOKS-WEBB

Inspiring start: children at Charlton Manor Primary School in southeast London

School is ready to do business

By Hannah Betts

ONE of the country's largest primary schools is challenging local businesses to help it to become the largest token collector in *The Times* Free Books for Schools Scheme.

Charlton Manor Primary School has been inspired by its pupils' enormous appetite for reading to set the target. Competition is likely to be fierce: more than 26,500 schools have already signed up for the scheme, three quarters of eligible schools.

Mark Selby, deputy head teacher of Charlton Manor, said: "We've got off to a flying start, but it would be fantastic if local groups could organise collections to swell our numbers. The school is really determined to make headway with the reading scheme."

Boys' greater reluctance than girls to read has been much debated by education experts. Jane May, Charlton Manor's special literacy co-ordinator, captures boys' interest by encouraging them to read plays. "It is something that makes reading dynamic for them. They love doing the voices and acting out the moves. We're just starting our 11-year-olds off on Shakespeare — *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* — which will really give them something to get their teeth into."

Inspired by their reading, the older children write and perform their own play as a treat after national tests in the spring. They have already spotted the plays they want to order from the free scheme.

The deadline for schools to register for The Free Books for Schools scheme is February 28. For details schools can call the helpline on 0171-481-3388.

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Thousands more go down with flu

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

THE number of reported flu cases increased by more than a third last week, and the number of deaths from chest infections also rose sharply.

Public Health Laboratory Service figures show that 272 cases of flu per 100,000 head of population were reported during the week ending last Sunday. They represent a big jump from the 28 per 100,000 reported a month earlier and the 183 per 100,000 the previous week, but are still well short of the epidemic level of 400 per 100,000.

Flu figures have been rising steadily over the past five weeks, which is normal for the usual annual outbreak of the disease. Hospitals are now reporting fewer admissions of flu patients, and scientists hope that the worst has passed.

The Association for Flu Monitoring and Surveillance (AFMS) reported that 3,219 people died from flu and other respiratory diseases in the first week of the year, up from 2,183 a week earlier and 1,599 in the last week of November.

A spokeswoman for AFMS said: "That takes the figures above the average we would expect, but it does not officially constitute an epidemic. The death rate and the flu rate is worse than last year, when it was exceptionally mild, but in 1996 the death rate peaked at around 5,000 in one week."

If the virus is following its usual five-week pattern, it should have peaked during the past week. "There may be another slight rise in the figures but hopefully this is the beginning of the end," the spokeswoman said.

Although the number of deaths from chest infections is high, the proportion attributable to flu is likely to be low. Between 2,500 and 4,000 die from flu each year, mostly between December and February. Other chest infections are responsible for at least ten times as many deaths.

Clinton's foe is linked to racist group

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

TRENT LOTT, the Senate Republican leader, made new efforts to distance himself from a stridently "white supremacist" group yesterday.

Mr Lott, a pivotal figure in shepherding President Clinton's impeachment trial, has been under scrutiny for the last month over his ties to the Council of Conservative Citizens, which flourishes in his home state of Mississippi and elsewhere in the Deep South.

In a statement issued hours before the trial was due to start, Mr Lott said: "I have made my condemnation of the white supremacist and racist view of this group, or any group, clear. Any use of my name to publicise their view is not only unauthorised — it's wrong." It was a bold attempt to duck out from the group's shadow, but it may not allay Mr Lott's critics.

In recent years Mr Lott has spoken at the council's national board meeting, posed with its leadership in his Senate office and submitted a column to the group's magazine, which carries racist articles.

Despite these links, Mr Lott has insisted he had "no first-hand knowledge" of the group's views. This came as a surprise to Mr Lott's Uncle Arnie — Arnie Watson back in Mississippi — who told *The New York Times*: "Trent's an honorary member."

When Mr Lott spoke to the delegates, he offered a ringing testament of support. He told them: "The people in this room stand for the right principles and the right philosophy. Let's take it in the right direction and our children will be the beneficiaries."

Another of the council's supporters will play a prominent role at Mr Clinton's trial. Bob Barr, a congressman from Georgia, is a prosecutor from the Judiciary Committee. He has sought to distance himself from the group, in addition to disavowing charges of hypocrisy over his personal life.

Larry Flynt, the avenging pornographer, accused Mr Barr of embracing family values while having an alleged affair and paying for his former wife to have an abortion.

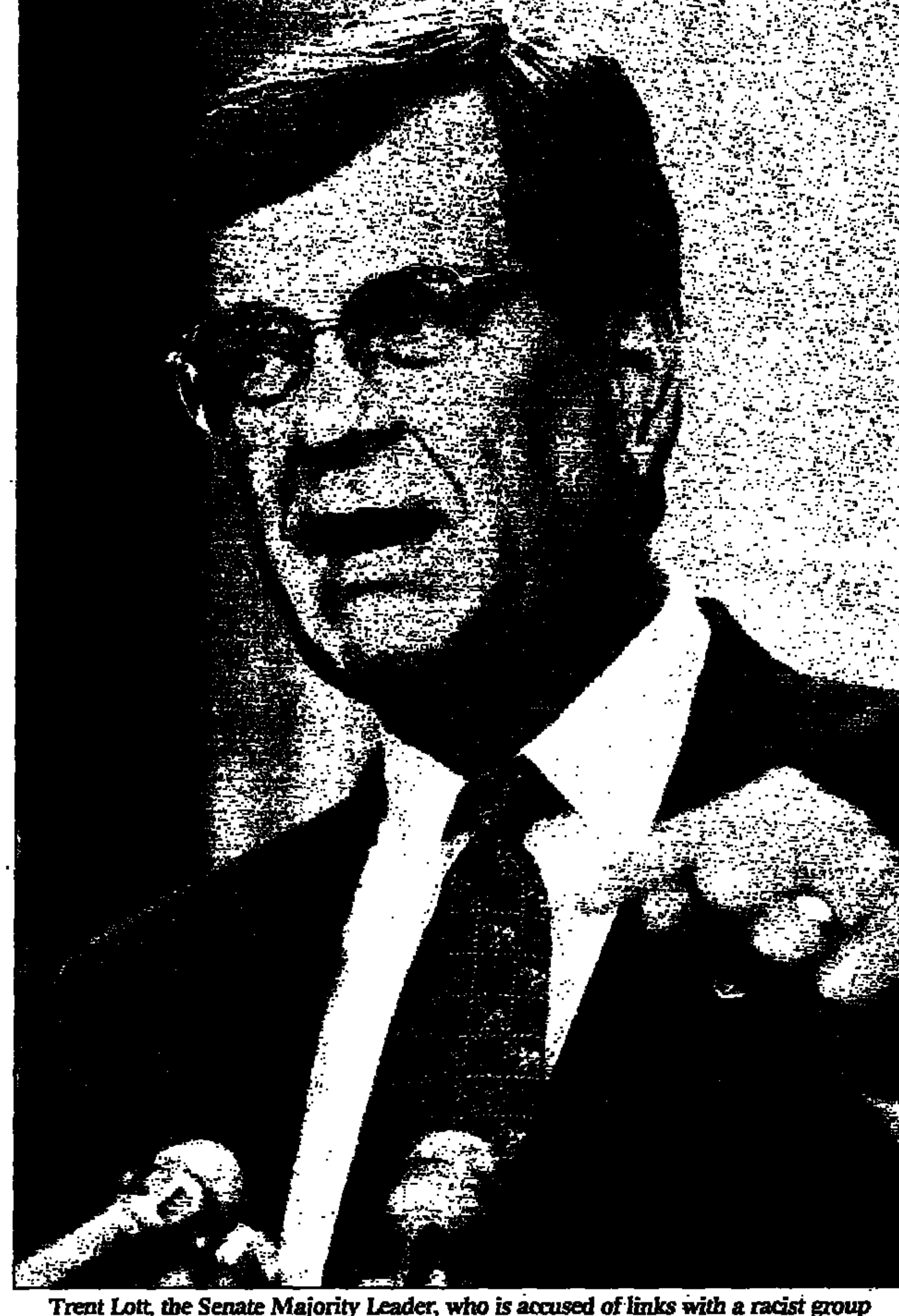
The Council of Conservative Citizens presents itself as a respectable organisation that advocates an end to racial quotas, favours tough immigration controls and promotes the South's Confederate heritage. Gordon Baum, chief executive, defended their anxieties: "We're going to be a majority non-white nation in a couple of years. Is that a legitimate concern? Yes, it is." The council grew out of the racist White Citizens' Councils, which battled against civil rights and fought to retain segregation as recently as 30 years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Centre, an organisation that monitors hate groups, reports.

A spokesman for the centre described the now defunct group as the "white-collar Ku Klux Klan" that appealed to business and civic leaders. Its old membership rolls were reportedly perused for recruits when the new Council of Conservative Citizens was formed in 1985.

Mr Lott cuts an immaculate figure in the Senate. His hair is perfectly combed and he re-irons his starched shirts after they come back from the laundry. His grasp of the leadership, which he took over from Bob Dole, has been less flawless, but he has voiced no overtly racist views on Capitol Hill.

An apologist for him could argue that any Republican running for the Senate from Mississippi would need to be affiliated with the council as a political necessity. Its leaders seem to understand Mr Lott's apparent disavowal of them. Mr Baum said: "He's got to do what he's got to do. We're not going to badmouth him."

JOE MARQUETTE / AP



Trent Lott, the Senate Majority Leader, who is accused of links with a racist group

US offers plan to end oil sanctions on Iraq

James Bone reports from New York on the diplomatic wrangling that is likely on what Baghdad can import

THE United States yesterday proposed the effective lifting of the United Nations oil embargo on Iraq, while maintaining strict limits on what the country can import.

Peter Burleigh, the US Ambassador, told the UN Security Council that Washington was ready to remove any cap on oil sales under the UN's oil-for-food scheme, which restricts Iraqi exports of crude to $5.2 billion (£3.2 billion) over a six-month period.

The US announcement, which follows France's call for the outright end of the oil embargo, means that all the major powers are now apparently in agreement that Iraq should be allowed to ship unlimited amounts of oil. The debate in the Security Council over the coming weeks will now be focused on the scope of Iraq's imports and the future of weapons inspections.

Mr Burleigh sought to play down the American proposal as "modifications and improvements" to the oil-for-food scheme, designed to help the Iraqi people. "We are talking about lifting the ceiling on the amount of money that can be spent on food and medicine," he said.

The oil-for-food programme allows Iraq to purchase not just food and medicine, however, but also humanitarian supplies such as equipment to repair its electricity or water infrastructures or to fix its oil industry.

Iraq is required to deposit oil revenue in a UN escrow account and to obtain approval from the UN sanctions committee for all humanitarian imports. The US said that it was willing to accept automatic UN approval of all Iraqi imports of food and medicines.

The initiative came just hours after US warplanes went into action for the fourth day running over Iraq. In response to threatened attacks, an American F16 fighter fired an anti-radar missile at an air defence installation in the northern no-fly zone, and an F15 launched a precision-guided missile at another surface-to-air missile battery.

The US proposal would have little practical impact in the short term because, with world prices so low, Iraq is currently unable to ship enough crude to meet its present UN quota.

The proposal differs from the French plan in that, while both would accept the unlimited export of oil, the Americans envisage much tighter restrictions on Iraq's imports. France would let Iraq import any goods and services except those falling within a UN arms embargo.

With all the major powers now apparently willing to let Iraq ship unlimited amounts of oil, the stage is set for a protracted diplomatic negotiation in the Security Council over the details of future restrictions on its imports and the fate of the UN weapons inspections operation.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Hindus killed in shrine stampede

Delhi: At least 31 Hindus were killed yesterday at a shrine when part of a hill on which they were praying caved in and they stampeded to seek safety, police said. The disaster took place at Sabarimala in the south Indian state of Kerala when thousands crowded onto the hill. More than 100 were injured. The devotees, among an estimated 1.5 million Hindus gathered at the shrine, began to jostle to view a celestial light and this led to the collapse, local officials said. Many people fell from the top of the 60ft hill, located in a thick forest. *(AFP, AP)*

North Korea talks

Seoul: America and South Korea agreed to establish a joint psychological warfare unit to try to win over North Koreans in the event of war on the peninsula. At annual security talks — attended by William Cohen, US Defence Secretary — military chiefs also discussed rapid reinforcement of the 37,000 US troops in South Korea in the event of a crisis. The meeting took place amid questions about North Korea's compliance with a 1994 deal that froze its nuclear programme. *(AFP)*

Lebanon truce flouted

Naqoura, Lebanon: The international committee monitoring the ceasefire in southern Lebanon yesterday found Lebanese and Israeli combatants guilty of violating their 1996 agreement not to harm civilians. Israel injured six villagers in a bombing raid on Janta on January 3, while rockets fired by Lebanese groups five days later fell inside northern Israel and on two villages in southern Lebanon. *(AFP)*

Sudan bombs hospital

Nairobi: Sudanese warplanes have bombed a hospital run by Médecins Sans Frontières in the southern town of Kajo Keji, destroying the immunisation block, the international medical charity announced. "We question whether this is a deliberate policy of the Government of Sudan to target civilian populations and hospitals," the organisation said of the attack, which was carried out on Wednesday. *(AFP)*

Viagra suit rejected

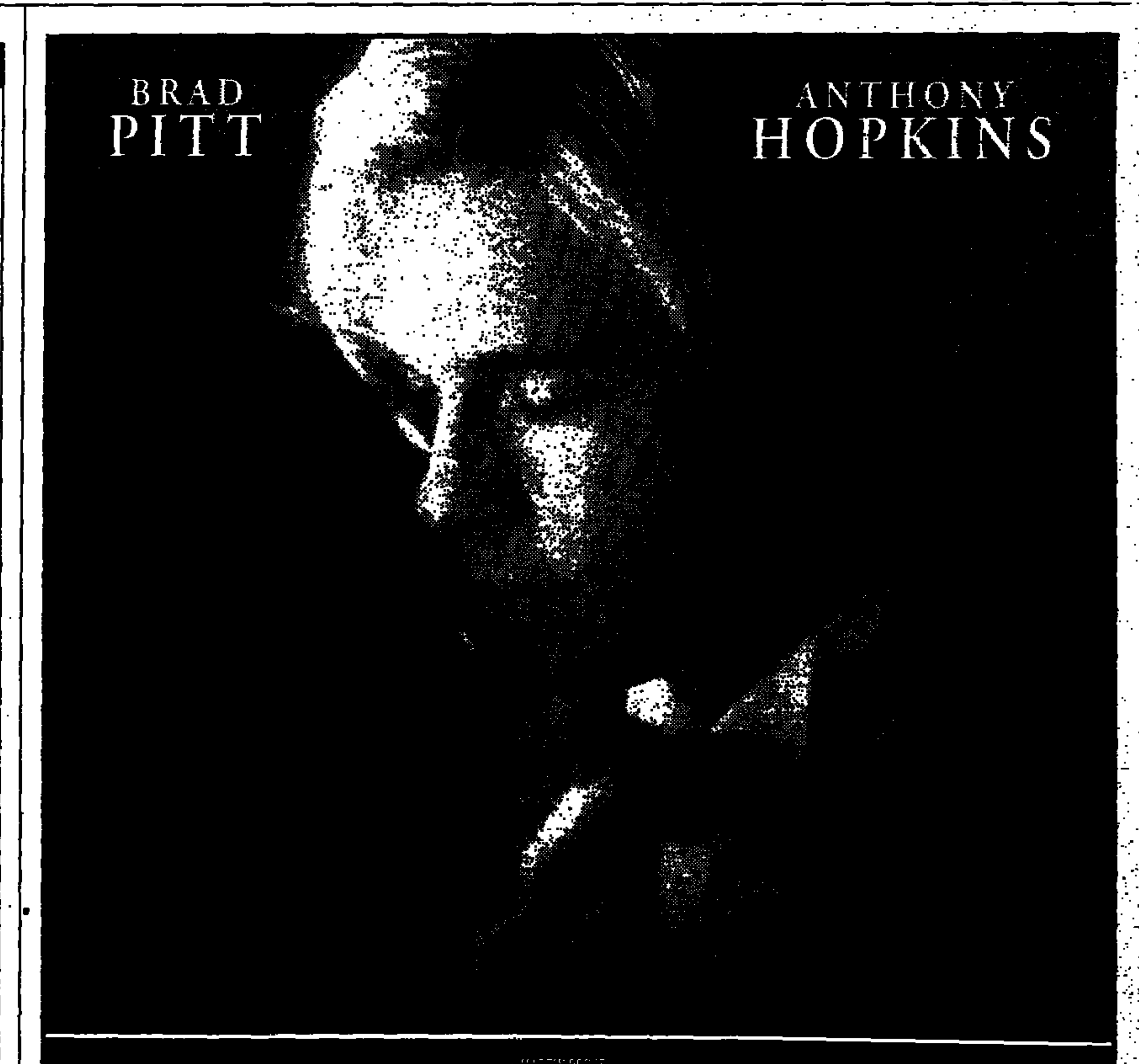
Paris: A court rejected a suit filed by an internationally known French doctor who sought a ban on the name Viagra, saying it was an anagram of his name, sources said. Dr Ronald Virag, who specialises in male impotence, had worked for Pfizer, the firm that makes Viagra, and helped to develop the molecule active in the blue anti-impotency pill. *(AFP)*

Loaded questions

Amman: A Jordanian television quiz show presenter, who rigged her programme so that she won most of the prizes, has been jailed for six months, the newspaper *Al-Arab Al-Yawm* said. Ayman Tawalbeh, presenter of *Win With TV*, was also fined £40 for supplying answers to contestants in exchange for most of the prize money. *(AFP)*

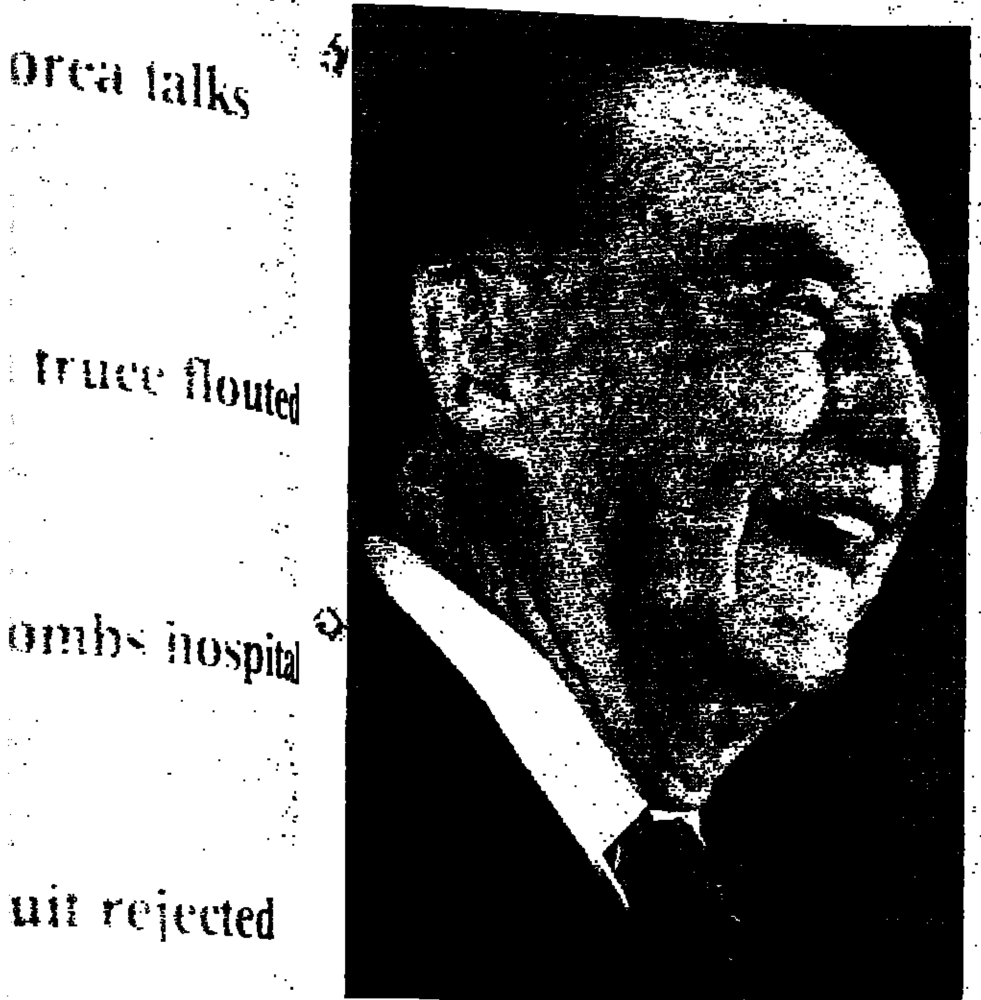
Off message, off course

Kiev: A Ukrainian businessman who bought a pager for each member of his staff as a New Year gift was so alarmed when all 50 of them went off at the same time that he drove his car into a lamp-post. The message on the 50 pagers read: "Congratulations on a successful purchase." *(Reuters)*



CLINTON ON TRIAL

Politics as usual for Capitol Hill veteran



Senator Thurmond, who at 96 seems to be the only one in Washington who is not about to succumb to hysteria

Damian Whitworth in Washington on a Southerner who's seen it all

STROM THURMOND was pottering about his Senate office pointing out the photographs, all inscribed with personal messages, of the Presidents under whom he has served. "There are a lot of good people there," he mused. "Reagan was good. And Bush. And that one ...", he said, pointing at Gerald Ford but struggling for his name. Then he came to Richard Nixon. "Nixon was one of the smartest, but he got into some trouble, if you remember?"

Such an interpretation of what everyone else regards as one of the most seismic events of modern American history was not intended as a playful understatement. It is simply that this is the way Strom Thurmond sees the world. At 96, the oldest person to sit in Congress and the longest-serving senator in history is not easily stirred by the comings and goings of Presidents.

On Capitol Hill younger guns, barely able to contain their excitement, explain the historical significance of President Clinton's trial by pointing out that "even Strom has seen nothing like it".

Sitting in his office, reflecting on a unique Washington career before yesterday's proceedings got under way, he seemed to be the one person in Washington who was not within a whisker of breaking down in hysteria. As the senior Republican in the Senate and the president pro tempore of the upper House, he was seen by millions around the world when he swore in the Chief Justice, William Rehnquist, at the formal opening of the trial last week.

It was a faintly absurd moment as Mr Thurmond clung uneasily to the desk to read out the oath while Mr Rehnquist towered over him in his black cape like something that haunts graveyards, and appeared to be about to slap the senator on the head. American commentators spoke of what an awesome moment it was in the nation's history. "I guess it's a challenge to the Senate," said Mr Thurmond, slowly and a little doubtfully. "But it's just part of our duties. It is what we have to do and we are going to abide by that." He chuckled: "Nothing awes me." With his historical perspective, that is easy to believe.

When Mr Thurmond first ran for local office in his native South Carolina in the late 1920s, he had Civil War veterans voting for him. He was decorated for his heroic exploits in Normandy on D-Day and has been a senator since 1954, first as a Democrat and since 1964 as a Republican. Once a staunch champion of segregation who ran for the presidency as an independent in 1948, he was one of the first Southern senators to hire blacks for his team. He once filibustered for 24 hours, barely drawing breath. Until last month he was chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

His personal life, too, is legendary. When his first wife died of cancer, he married a beauty queen 44 years his junior and sired the first of four children at the age of 69. He is still famous for his keen eye for women — he has 20/20 vision — and his 40 strong staff contains a conspicuous number of pretty female trainees. He puts his vitality down to "diet and good genes". At receptions he thinks nothing of consuming two dozen oysters but is virtually teetotal. Until one of his sons came to work in Washington, he lived alone in nearby Alexandria, looking after himself with a routine that includes exercising for 45 minutes with weights every day. He has a bone-crushing handshake.

Mr Thurmond is on his ninth President since he joined the Senate. "Presidents come and go, but I remain," he likes to tell staff.

One would think that as a former ally of Nixon, to whom he delivered the South in 1968, he would be a fierce enemy of Mr Clinton. But he has been Mr Clinton's guest at the White House and the President attended his 90th birthday party. "We are not of the same party, but I have had a good relationship with him," he said.

He is saddened by the President's sorry behaviour, but appears to see it as little more than that. He shrugs and says: "It is just part of the way things happen."

HOW THE SENATE IMPEACHMENT TRIAL WILL WORK

The Senate trial will be held six days a week, excluding Sundays; on a majority vote the Senate may decide to waive Saturday sessions. There will be no proceedings on Monday due to the Martin Luther King holiday.

THE CHARGES

Article I: Alleges President Clinton "wilfully provided perjurious, false and misleading testimony" before independent counsel Kenneth Starr's grand jury on August 17, 1998.

Article III: Alleges Clinton "prevented, obstructed and impeded the administration of justice and has to that end engaged personally, and through his subordinates and agents, in a course of conduct or scheme designed to delay, impede, cover up and conceal the existence of evidence and testimony" related to the Paula Jones case.

JUDGE AND JURY

The Judge: William Rehnquist. Chief Justice of the US is the presiding officer of the trial, but the senators, acting as jurors, can vote to overrule his decisions

Rehnquist, 74, appointed to the Supreme Court by Richard Nixon in 1971, became Chief Justice in 1986.

THE COURT

JUDGE: William Rehnquist

DEFENCE: President's attorneys and members of the White House counsel's office

PROSECUTION: 13 House managers, members of the House

THE WELL is where the prosecution and the defence will present their cases

DEMOCRATS: 45 SEATS

THE PROCEEDINGS

1. The senators have each taken an oath as a juror.
2. The Chief Justice of the United States presides. The Senate has subpoena power.
3. The accused is advised of the charges against him, but the trial will proceed with or without his presence.
4. The House presented its opening arguments yesterday afternoon. Prosecutors will have 24 hours, spread over several days, to present their case. The President's lawyers will then have the same amount of time to present their defence.
5. Senators will pose questions to both sides for up to 16 hours. Motions to dismiss case, call witnesses or request evidence will be heard and debated. If allowed, witnesses will first be questioned in private and the Senate will decide after depositions which could testify.
6. After witness testimony, Senate deliberates and votes on articles. Two-thirds vote (67) needed to remove President.

THE RULES

Senators are not to talk during the trial. If a senator wants to ask a question of a witness, the senator must submit that question in writing to the Chief Justice. The Senate doors must remain open unless the senators are deliberating.

NET LINKS

www.thomas.loc.gov — main congressional site.
www.whitehouse.gov — official White House website.
www.impeachclinton.org — Committee to Impeach the President.
www.moveon.org — petition urging Congress to censure Clinton.
www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com — the 1868 impeachment.

Senators given lesson in classroom decorum

COURT RULES

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

SENATORS, accustomed to commanding the floor of the upper house and listening to the sound of their own voices for as long as they wish, have been issued with strict rules to keep them in order during the trial of the President.

The layout of the chamber is not unlike a classroom. Senators sit at old-fashioned desks on which, according to long-standing tradition, they carve their initials like schoolboys. Before them, on a dais like a headmaster, sits William Rehnquist, the Chief Justice. Now the senators are actually being treated like pupils.

Normally, when the Senate is sitting, the chamber will be mostly empty except for the individual who is speaking. Those who are present mill around in groups gossiping away, not always very quietly, while others sit and write letters or read, keeping half an ear out for when the speaker shuts up and they can take their turn at the microphone.

When the trial formally opened last week it took some time to call the Senate to order with Strom Thurmond, the president *pro tempore*, forced to demand that those who could not keep quiet continue their chatter in the cloakrooms. With this in mind, Senate leaders handed out "Decorum Guidelines" to all 100 members sitting as the jury.

All senators must be present at all times. Then, whenever Mr Rehnquist enters the chamber everyone must stand in silence and not sit down until he does. They must rise again when he leaves. The hardest part, perhaps, is that naturally garrulous senators must remain silent throughout the trial. Even when it comes to cross-examination of the prosecution and defence they must submit their questions in written form and only the best will be read out.

The etiquette guide strictly forbids whispering, and mobile telephones and pagers must be switched off. The only time they can speak is when they are spoken to and that will only be when they are asked to vote.

The Senate leadership team said it hoped "these general guidelines will help to lend the greatest dignity to these proceedings".

Networks snack on hearings to avoid indigestible viewing

TELEVISION

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA'S television networks were agonising yesterday over how much live coverage to give the trial. While it is undoubtedly of historic significance, broadcast executives regard hours of arguments as a potential turn-off for viewers — and definitely a huge loss of income from commercials.

Networks plan to snack on the trial, dipping in for newsworthy moments and updates but leaving gavel-to-gavel coverage to cable channels.

The timing is a nightmare, too. Hearings start at 1pm, cutting into soap operas and talk shows, and could continue until 9pm, well into prime time for most of America bar the West Coast. Even worse, the Senate is sitting on Saturdays, when networks are obliged to carry children's programmes and have a heavy schedule of lucrative sports events. CBS switched to sport during the Congress impeachment vote climax on a Saturday — and drew millions more viewers than those networks staying on Capitol Hill.

News channels may have to cover other major events, too. But when the impeachment hearings clashed with Operation Desert Fox, split-screen technology came to the rescue.



Rush on dollar as crisis hits Brazil

trial judge key evidence

Rough ju

Rough justice stalks streets of Freetown



In the wake of their campaign of atrocities, rebels are now being shot on sight, reports Sam Kiley from Freetown

ENRAGED residents tore down wooden scaffolding to use as clubs on suspected rebel infiltrators in central Freetown yesterday, while Nigerian troops set up roadblocks and simply shot them.

The rage of both the civilians and the troops — while morally inexcusable — is understandable, given the atrocities committed by the Revolutionary United Front.

Just off Siaka Stevens Street, the city's main street, three bodies lay in the road where they had been murdered by the rebels. One man had had his arms tied behind his back before being hacked to death. He lay face down in the road as hundreds of terrified civilians from the east of the city, where fighting was continuing, streamed past in the hope of reaching the relative safety of the west.

Nigerian soldiers blocked their road out. "We cannot allow them to all come into the safe zones or we will face another infiltration," a Nigerian colonel said. "You cannot even trust the children here, an eight-year-old can kill you."

The day before, a close friend of the colonel, a major, was shot in the groin by a child.

"We're not bothering to take any rebels prisoner any more," a Nigerian private said. "They get locked up or retrained and put into the Sierra Leone army, and then they turn against us. This time we are going to get rid of them and not tell our officers."

The grisly evidence of this policy among the rank and file, scores of fresh corpses, lay scattered along a muddy bank in the west of the city. Nigerian soldiers had spotted a building being run by a prominent Freetown businesswoman as a safe house for the rebels.

"We lie in wait and grab the killers as they try to go in. They are taken down to the beach and we get rid of them," the soldier said.

In central Freetown, Doreen Smith collapsed into hysteria when asked about her experiences during a week of rebel rule. Her entire family had been murdered. "They killed everyone, everyone, and now I'm starving and my baby is sick," she cried.

Benjamin Columbus-Cole nodded sadly. His son, Eugene, 18, has been gunned down on the street outside his home. "We had to take him to the cemetery in a wheelbarrow," he said. Mr Columbus-Cole said that they had also seen several white mercenaries, possibly Ukrainians, including one woman, working alongside the rebels.

"They were manning an anti-aircraft gun next to my house. When they ran away, they burnt my house down," said Frank Harold, gesturing at a smoking ruin.

After a week of fighting in Freetown, the International Committee of the Red Cross was yesterday asked to leave by the Government because some of its local staff were suspected of rebel sympathies and of jamming radio communications. The reluctant departure of the five Red Cross workers leaves the city's population facing food shortages and a medical catastrophe as hospitals have been filled to overflowing by wounded civilians.

Yesterday Foday Sankoh, the imprisoned leader of the Revolutionary United Front who was condemned to death for his part in an uprising against President Kabbah in 1997, offered to order a ceasefire, provided the RUF was allowed to re-form as a political party. The offer coincided with news that his men had kidnapped Joseph Ganda, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Freetown. What the new party's agenda would be is unclear. But what is certain is that its supporters would remain a terrifying threat to the stability of Sierra Leone.

However, the UN and other mediators appear willing to settle for peace at any price.

"Give me just two M124 helicopter gunships and some more men and weapons, and we can sort this problem out once and for all," said Major-General Timothy Shelpidi, the Nigerian force commander.

Many of his colleagues hoped that a British warship currently steaming towards Freetown might bring just such help. Without it, they said, Sierra Leone will plummet further into its nightmare.

Leading article, page 23

JEAN-PHILIPPE KSIAZEK / AFP



Kamajors, traditional hunters who have sided with the Ecomog forces, on their way to fight rebels in Freetown



Abargil: alleges she was attacked in Italy

Ban lifted in Miss World rape case

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

A BAN on publication of details about the sexual assault and attempted murder of Miss World several months ago in Italy was lifted yesterday when Israeli police announced that they expected to charge a 43-year-old travel agent with the crimes.

Shlomo Nour, who is suspected of raping the 19-year-old Israeli model, Linor Abargil, was arrested when he landed at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport on Saturday. "I expect the indictment will be issued on Sunday," said a police officer, Yaffa Golan.

Ms Abargil alleges that Mr Nour, an Egyptian-born Israeli who has converted to Judaism, raped her at knifepoint outside Milan, where he owned a travel agency, on October 6 last year, then tied her up, sealed her mouth with masking tape and tried to strangle her. He denies the allegations.

The alleged attack took place just seven weeks before Ms Abargil, a media and communications student from near Tel Aviv, won the revamped Miss World contest in the Seychelles.

Yesterday's lifting of the injunction that had prevented publication of the details in Israel was requested by Ms Abargil's lawyers. It was imposed to prevent the suspect, whose wife and three children live in Jerusalem, from knowing that he was being watched.

Ms Abargil's lawyer said that she was requesting the lifting of the ban to set an example for other women who had been sexually assaulted.

Rush on dollar as crisis hits Brazil

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN RIO DE JANEIRO

MANY Brazilians rushed to change savings into dollars, cancelled trips abroad and will inevitably stop buying expensive imported luxuries as the ghost of inflation and economic instability returned to haunt their currency.

Banks and exchange bureaux yesterday reported a day of "panic dollar-buying" in reaction to a feeling that the Brazilian real will continue to fall further after the Government's announcement of a 9 per cent devaluation on Wednesday. But so far a much-feared and expected economic meltdown has had little effect on the man in the street.

All investors' eyes remained on capital outflows that have caused more than £1.8 billion to leave the foreign reserve coffers in three days. An estimated £.9 billion poured out on Wednesday alone and, unless the tide turns, economists voiced fears that Brazil could run out of cash to keep defending the real.

However, for most Brazilians an economic crisis causes public outrage only when it shows up starkly on unemployment figures and internal food and essential goods prices. "We've seen worse before and it will not be a surprise to have hard times again," said Penha da Silva, a bakery owner.

So far the crisis, which has has sent shock waves across global markets, is just another economic turn for hardy Brazilians. They are watching and waiting to see what happens next before they panic. Carnival preparations, which normally herald high spending for the poorer population, and beachside holidays, which occupy many middle-class families from now until the end of March, are uninterrupted.

Economists may be predicting that Latin America's largest economy is on the edge of collapse, but Brazilians seem to be listening to calls for calm by President Cardoso. Since 1994 he has lifted the country from hyperinflation and introduced reforms that have brought economic growth, low inflation and stability.

Pedro Malan, the Finance Minister, was yesterday heading for Washington on a "damage control" mission with which he hopes to reassure foreign investors and creditors.

Markets nervous, page 27

Anwar trial judge bars 'key' evidence

Kuala Lumpur: Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia's sacked Finance Minister, yesterday denounced a decision by the judge in his trial to throw out evidence which his lawyers said proved he did not commit sodomy and adultery.

Judge Augustine Paul ruled that evidence relating to sexual misconduct and sodomy introduced during two-and-a-half months of testimony in the sex and corruption trial was now irrelevant.

Mr Anwar's lawyers said the judge's ruling would make it more difficult for the former Deputy Prime Minister to prove his argument that he was the victim of a plot by associates of his former mentor, Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister.

Mr Anwar told reporters he was disgusted with the judge's decision. The high court was now concerned only with whether he abused his power to obtain retractions from his accusers and not whether the accusations were false.

"They abused me for two months and now I can't say anything," he said. "This is Mahathir's justice." (Reuters)

Santer and team put on parole

Commissioners live to fight again as MEPs draw back from brink, reports **Charles Bremner** in Strasbourg

AFTER a week of noisy threats, the European Parliament yesterday stepped back from the brink and spared the European Commission any immediate punishment for alleged fraud and mismanagement in its midst.

However, the Parliament's retreat in the battle of Brussels stopped short of full surrender because a significant 44 per cent minority voted for dismissing Jacques Santer, the Commission President, and his whole executive, ensuring them lame-duck status for the final 11 months of their tenure.

Effectively put on probation and subject to a new fraud inquiry by a panel of "wise men", Mr Santer told MEPs that he had "received your message loud and clear".

He also revealed how narrow was his escape. He had, he said, planned to resign if a simple majority of MEPs had voted to censure his team, although a two-thirds majority was required.

The vote was 293 votes to 232 for censure, the "nuclear weapon" that would have sacked the Commission. The score was close because almost all of Germany's Social Democrat MEPs defied their party and their Government and voted against the European Commission.

A sense of anti-climax pervaded the rambling Strasbourg Parliament after a string of votes that averted an EU crisis, greatly relieved Mr Santer's team and EU Governments, and sent MEPs rushing out to claim an "historic" assertion of parliamentary power that represented a "coming of age" for the institution.

"The Commission has taken a hit to its credibility. What we did today was to give it a good kick in the backside," said Pauline Green, the British Labour MEP who leads the dominant Socialist bloc. Mrs Green was loudly jeered by centre-right MEPs when she claimed a resounding success for her *tactic last month in starting* the whole confidence test of the Brussels executive over its failure to end corruption and malpractice.

Critical conservatives said the Parliament had once again proved itself a toothless watchdog that barked a lot but failed to bite. The British Tory group said the deal that allowed Mr Santer off the hook had amounted to "a massive climbdown by the Socialists in the face of overwhelming evidence of nepotism, corruption, mismanagement and fraud in the European Commission." Alan Donnelly, the Labour group leader, insisted: "We haven't acted as wimps. We have acted with great responsibility."

> 'This is a blatant slap in the face ... it is now a zombie executive'

When the dust settled after a tense 90-minute session of line-by-line voting on three motions, Mr Santer and his 19 fellow commissioners broke into smiles as they sat in line on a dais before the MEPs.

The MEPs first overwhelmingly rejected an attempt by the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), the second group in the assembly, along with the Liberals and Greens, to single out Edith Cresson of France and Manuel Marin of Spain, the commissioners deemed to have the worst records for bad management. A majority in favour would have triggered a threat by Mr Santer to resign in solidarity. *Parliament then backed a Socialist resolution which holds* the Commission to greater outside scrutiny. It calls for the independent "wise man's inquiry" to report with initial findings on fraud by March 15. It demands that the Commission sack individual commissioners if they are blamed for any cases of fraud.

After Mr Santer told Parliament that he accepted the terms, the Socialists withdrew their censure motion, leaving the Parliament to vote for a second one, tabled by the Eurosceptic Europe of the Nations group. It was then that MEPs vented their wrath over the Commission, causing gasps with the nerve that they displayed with the unprecedented 44 per cent level of rejection. "This is a blatant slap in the face for Santer and his team," said the Greens. "The Commission is a dead man walking. Santer now heads a zombie Commission."

Mr Santer was clearly wounded by the negative vote from Germany's Christian Democrats, the group from his own political family which had strongly backed his appointment in 1994. "It saddens me to see my own family divided," he said.

MEPs insisted that they would stand by their threat to relaunch the censure vote if the Commission failed to clean up its house by April. They also claimed that they had scored an important victory in Mr Santer's apparent acceptance that he would sack individual commissioners if they were brought to book by the new panel. However, setting off back to Brussels after the toughest week of his Commission career, Mr Santer seemed back to his blithe self. He was, he said, very satisfied that the Parliament had "performed its democratic function".

Simon Jenkins, page 22



Jacques Santer, centre, President of the European Commission, looks on during yesterday's vote on censure

$2.5bn of loan to France 'vanished'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A FORMER secret service agent has told a French court that £1.5 billion, part of a £15 billion loan to France from Saudi Arabia, "vanished" during the mid-1980s, possibly with the connivance of senior French politicians.

Bernard Pichon, who said he had worked on behalf of the DGSE, the French secret service, appeared as a witness in a libel trial and claimed that he had been ordered in September 1983 to investigate the alleged loan.

"France, in financial difficulties, was obliged to borrow on the parallel market. So Saudi Arabia lent her, in a private capacity, $25 billion ... $2.5 billion vanished into thin air," M Pichon told the Paris tribunal, citing the names of senior Socialist figures under the late President Mitterrand as having knowledge of the affair.

The claims follow similar allegations made in a 1994 book by Jean Montaldo, who alleged that the deal, code-named the "Josephine Affair", was partly organised through the French bank, Crédit Lyonnais. Last year M Montaldo told *Le Point* magazine that a fire at Crédit Lyonnais had "opportunely" destroyed records of the Josephine deal. The bank sued for libel, and on Monday M Pichon gave evidence in the case.

The allegations, if true, would make the other scandals of the Mitterrand years pale into insignificance, and several senior Socialists have dismissed the claims as invention.

Kosovo rebels gain new status in hostage 'deal'

FROM TOM WALKER IN GNJILANE

NIKOLA SAINOVIC, the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister, said yesterday that his Government would never give in to terrorism, countering off-the-record briefings from Western diplomats that Belgrade is about to do just the opposite and release nine Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas captured by Yugoslav forces last month.

The Kosovo hostage crisis, which ended with the release of eight Yugoslav soldiers by the KLA on Wednesday, marked a sea change in the struggle for control of the province.

The 1999 version of the KLA is a better armed, better organised fighting unit than the ragtag peasant army of last year, and by drawing the cream of the Western diplomatic corps from Washington to Geneva into the frantic wheeler-dealing behind the soldiers' release, it has effectively become a negotiating partner on a par with Belgrade.

"The evidence suggests the Serbs will release prisoners, and Belgrade is going to have to come up with some clever wording to detract from the impression that it is in fact dealing with terrorists," said a European diplomat.

While William Walker, chief of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, who brokered the hostage deal — his aides have barred the use of the term "swap" — nervously awaits the release of the nine KLA prisoners, the anachronistic Serb-controlled judicial system for Kosovo is creaking through the motions of a beleaguered state dealing as best it can with ethnic insurrection. A statement issued by the Serb media centre in Pristina this week said that in the first 11 days of 1999, "groups of Albanian terrorists committed 80 terrorist attacks at the police, army and civilians in Kosovo. During 1998, 1,854 terrorist attacks were committed, in which 284 persons were killed and 556 wounded." The figures are the statistical attempt to convince the outside world there is no war in Kosovo, although the province is more firmly divided into KLA and Serb-controlled territories than ever before.



Alfie Cox of South Africa rides in the twelfth stage of the rally between Nema and Tichitt in Mauritania

Desert bandits ambush Paris-Dakar drivers

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

MARAUDING bandits ambushed 50 competitors in the Paris-Dakar Rally, seizing their vehicles at gunpoint and leaving them stranded in the Mauritanian desert.

The race, one of the world's most gruelling rallies, came to a halt 30 miles from the town of Tichitt, when heavily armed bandits attacked a motorcyclist, three quad-bikes, 12 cars and seven lorries during the twelfth stage of the rally.

The 20-strong gang stole four cars, two belonging to rally officials and two to members of the press, three lorries, one of which belonged to an official and two to competitors, and a motorcycle.

The thieves systematically searched all the drivers and stole their money and papers. They then drained all the remaining vehicles of their petrol. No one was injured in the attack and all succeeded in returning to base at Tichitt.

Rally organisers yesterday decided to go ahead with the thirteenth stage from Tichitt to Atar. The three stolen lorries were later recovered by the Mauritanian Army after a helicopter chase as the bandits headed north towards either Algeria or Mali.

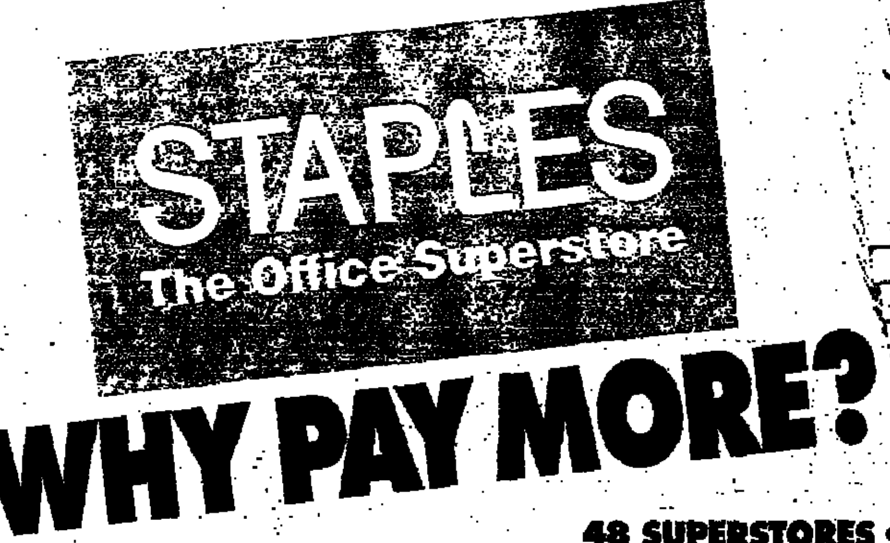
Four squadrons of Mauritian soldiers had set off yesterday to intercept the four stolen cars, which are also reported to be heading north.

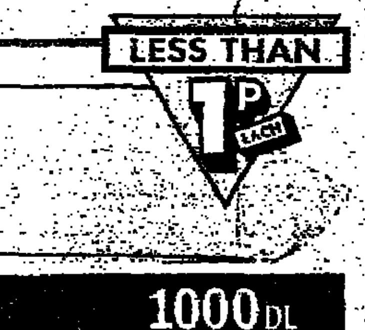
"This is banditry. The robbers came to steal vehicles, fuel and money," said Hubert Auriol, the rally director. He thanked the Mauritanian authorities for their prompt action.

"The Mauritanians are extremely angry by what has happened in their territory. They attach great importance to security," he said.

M Auriol said he believed the attack may have been the work of a group of dissidents who want to undermine the Timbuktu peace agreement which marked the end of the Tuareg rebellion in 1996. There was also speculation yesterday that the thieves may belong to the same gang that last year carried out a similar attack on rally competitors shortly before they reached the end of the tenth stage near the Sahara desert town of Taoudenni in Mali.

Victims of the ambush described one of their attackers as wearing a Tatra blouson-style jacket. In last year's ambush, a Tatra lorry belonging to the Czech Sklenovsky-Hamerla-Tomecek team was stolen. Five cars and two lorries were also attacked in last year's ambush. All the competitors were rescued and there were no casualties, but the next stage of the rally in Mali was cancelled for security reasons.







'At heart, the eternal fifth-former'

Basil Hume could never be a salesman of religion. He does not "market" Christianity. And that is why he is the most attractive Christian leader in the country. For, in the end, we are not called to show that God is relevant to us, but to find in God the measure of the relevance of everything that we do. It is precisely in people who do *not* shout and compete for our attention that we may begin to guess that religion has something to say. By refusing to promote religion as the latest "leisuretime activity", they pay us the compliment of not regarding us as "consumers". In them, we may recognise *who* we are called to be.
The Most Reverend Timothy Radcliffe, Master of the Dominican Order

COMMENTATORS often draw attention to his innate modesty of manner. Such a virtue is hard to define, but most would agree that it has something to do with the way in which the person relates to those with whom they are immediately in contact.

In the cardinal's case, that sense of the worth of the other is strongly influenced by his conviction that every human being he meets is superior to him in some way. That makes him particularly receptive to listening with an open mind. Sometimes that receptivity and openness could lead him along surprising pathways.

There was the occasion when a nervous young priest with much on his mind came to see him at around 10.30am one weekday. When asked what he would like to drink, the young priest suggested a gin and tonic! As far as I can recall, the cardinal decided that pastoral flexibility called in that particular instance for a positive response.
Bishop John Crowley

Cardinal Hume's friends conclude their tributes with insights into the boyish schoolmaster, the prince of the Church and the simple pastor to the starving

FATHER BASIL HUME became my housemaster (at Ampleforth College) in September 1958, when I was 14. He was a great teacher. He used no fear tactics, no anger. He was serious, inspirational and encouraging; yet he was funny and down-to-earth. And not just in the classroom. He wanted us to do well in sport, to excel wherever possible.

He was like one of us. Visits by his imperious French mother were hilarious. Marie Elizabeth Tisseyre, the imposing widow of Sir William Errington Hume, CMG, would arrive outside our House in a chauffeur-driven car, wind down her window and yell "Georges!" Father Basil would jump from his chair, run his hands over his hair, rub his toe-caps on the back of his trousers and run to greet his mother — like any other fifth-former.

Once a week, he would give us a talk (or "jaw", as it was called). On one occasion, he described the world as essentially consisting of three kinds of people. Some, he said, were utterly brilliant, could see every problem and work out every answer. They were very few, but they would invariably get to the top. Others (and into this category we all, quite clearly, fell) could see all the problems but not all the answers, or, worse still, had all the answers but could not see all the problems. We would need to work hard, very hard, to get to the top. A third category (and it was obvious he admired this lot) didn't bother to analyse problems or work out solutions. They fixed their sights on a single objective and went "wham"! They would invariably get there. The moral of the tale? It's good to be brainy and work hard, but the essential ingredient is faith.

Father Basil (as I would continue to know him) was elected abbot five months after I'd left the school. When I heard of this, I immediately drove up to see him. I found him sitting in his office peacefully reading his breviary, listening to music. His face was drawn. It had obviously come as a shock. His ultimate ambition had been to retire to a North of England parish with some decent trout fishing near by. He had not expected his election as abbot.

BASIL HUME *by his friends*

In an effort to lighten the atmosphere, I asked to see his abbatial ring. True to form, I tried it on and then realised I couldn't get it off. In my panic and frantic effort to take it off, my finger became the size of a sausage. We were both in a slight panic. I asked him if this made me Abbot of Ampleforth. He was not particularly amused. In the end, with the help of some linseed oil from the locker room, we managed to get it off. I don't suppose he ever took it off again — except when it was time for him to swap it for the archiepiscopal ring of the see of Westminster.
Neil Balfour

THE cardinal is interpreted as, and understood to be, a man of prayer. He writes about prayer as a practitioner, not as an observer. He may not be a miracle worker, but somehow he comes across as an unaffected and good man.

Is this why Westminster Cathedral was packed when he celebrated a Mass for the repose of the soul of Diana, Princess of Wales, on the Friday evening before her funeral? The Catholic community wanted to mourn and pray for Diana and her family. With a total absence of affectation, with absolutely no side, the cardinal addressed his words to her directly. He spoke from the heart — and for the heart of a deeply wounded and grieving congregation. In one of the side chapels there was a photo of Diana on display. She was shown on a visit to the cathedral, leaning forward to talk to a diminutive choirboy. Her photo held iconic status that evening.

There are those who suggest that the cardinal should accept a seat in the House of Lords, so that a "Catholic voice" could make itself heard with new authority. I believe this to be a myth. There are plenty of Catholics in the House of Lords, as in the Palace of Westminster in general. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster's task lies elsewhere. He is, above all, a pastor.
Sister Lavinia Byrne

AT intervals during his tenure, the cardinal has publicly looked forward to resigning and returning to a monastery or becoming a hermit. He has never done so. The truth could be that one half of him loves being Cardinal Archbishop — "Hume, Westminster", he has on his suitcase label — and the other half is shocked to discover it. Some of his priests also find the cardinal indecisive, not to say at times erratic and impulsive. But the truth is that he tries never to close down an avenue when there is a person who could be helped by its being kept open. If someone is in trouble, he will cut through clerical rigmarole to talk to them as one human being to another. He can be infinitely kind and gentle.
John Wilkins, Editor of *The Tablet*

IN 1984, Cardinal Hume went to Ethiopia, an experience that changed his life. When we met to plan the visit, he repeated again and again that he wanted to go as a "simple pastor", not a "famine tourist".

I took a deep breath and told the cardinal that I didn't think he had a choice. Whether he liked it or not, the media would want to cover his trip and it would be self-indulgent to try to pretend he could make a private visit to a tragedy that had suddenly become the focus of the world's attention. Although I understood and sympathised with his position, I felt — and here I struggled to find the right word — he would just have to prostitute himself. There was something of a pause and a look that said: "Well, that's the first time anyone's called me a prostitute." He agreed to go public, though.

Each of us has his or her own particular memory of the trip. Mine is of an old woman. Though she had nothing, she was still going through the motions of the ancient Ethiopian coffee-making ceremony. It was her way of making some kind of sense of what had happened to her. Julian's was of kids by the side of the road digging the ground with their bare hands, looking for grass seeds to eat. The cardinal will never forget his meeting with a young boy with piercing eyes. When he asked him what was wrong with him, he had answered, simply and profoundly: "I am hungry." Later, when he looked through our photographs, he recognised this boy at once. He has had his picture on the wall of his study ever since.
Julian Filochowski and Cathy Corcoran, of Cafod (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development)

● *From* Basil Hume: By His Friends, *edited by Carolyn Butler. HarperCollins (RRP £8.99). Readers can buy this title for just £7.99 by calling The Times Bookshop: 0990-329 454*

PETER RYAN



Cardinal of contradictions — Hume seems to enjoy his role, but still yearns for the hermit's cell



Wendy Cope chooses her favourite book

I LEARNT to read at home with my Granny. *The Buttercup Farm Family* was the first book I remember reading. I was looking over Nana's shoulder and I suddenly realised I could read. The sad thing is that once I could read for myself, I didn't let anybody read to me. I loved *The Jungle Books* and *Winnie The Pooh* — they both made me laugh a lot when I eventually understood their humour at about eight years old.

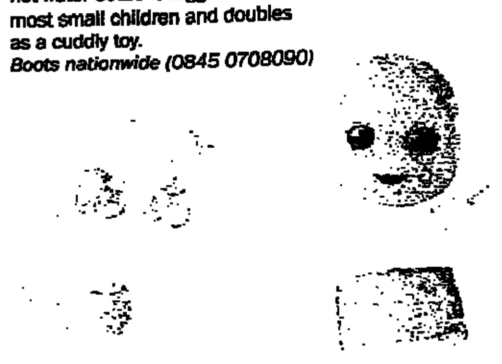
THE TIMES FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

Nights in white satin

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TELETUBBIES LAA-LAA, £18
Fantastic for little ones, this Laa-Laa hot-water bottle is bigger than most small children and doubles as a cuddly toy.
Boots nationwide (0845 0708090)



GOLD HEARTS, £17.95
These three chunky gold hearts floating in a transparent bottle look rather opulent. It's a pity to keep them under wraps.
Harrods, Knightsbridge SW1 (0171-730 1234)
7/10



MICROWARMER, £15
Waiting for the kettle to boil is a drag, so try the microwaveable hot-water bottle, although it can take from two to four minutes depending on the microwave power.
Boots, as before
8/10

FROG, £9.95
A funky hot-water bottle for children, it is green and transparent with a smiling, jumping frog inside.
Inventory, 26-40 Kensington High Street W8 (0171-937 2626)
8/10

ROSEBUD, £14.50
Rosebuds are the new motif for this year's transparent hot-water bottle craze. Now if your loved one sends you flowers, the blooms will never die.
Graham & Green, 7 Elgin Crescent W11 (0171-727 4594)
7/10

LYNX FAKE FUR, £45
For those with more expensive tastes, snuggle up to something warm and luxurious at night – fake fur on one side and sumptuous velvet on the other.
Hélène Berman at Liberty, Regent Street W1 (0171-734 1234)
10/10

COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT

MOVIESTORE COLLECTION



"I didn't want to alarm the postman, but a batsqueak of allure strikes me as an indispensable feature of a good nightgown"

CUTTING EDGE

JANE SHILLING

Having just spent a week immersed, so to speak, in nightwear, I have come to the conclusion that you can tell a good deal about a nation's attitude to sex by what it chooses to wear in bed.

Just before Christmas I had a nightie crisis. Rising in the small hours to answer a distress call from my son, I happened to catch sight of myself in the long wardrobe mirror. It was a horrid shock — a bagladyish figure, clad in a disgraceful old T-shirt and a matted cardigan long overdue a transfer to dog-basket duties. The sight was enough to convince me that it was time for some new nightwear.

I knew what I was looking for — it hadn't to be too fragile (peau de soie and Marmite toast don't mix well), nor too inflammatory — and I didn't want to alarm the postman, but a batsqueak of allure strikes me as an indispensable feature of a good nightgown. At the couture end of the market, in what you might call the *poule-de-luxe* territory of Janet Reger or Agent Provocateur, there is no shortage of lovely things. Little satin and crystal bead slippers, by Inner Sole, from Whistles, are on my birthday list, as is a pashmina dressing gown by Jenny Bolton, from Browns Living, or a cashmere one from N. Peal.

But if you had planned to spend less than £100, the market contracts sharply into four rough categories, none of which was what I had in mind. To start with there is the Queen of the Locker Room look, in the sort of grey marl interlock that looks well-worn even when new. Then there is Barmaid's Exotic — slippery polyester glamour gowns in violent shades unknown to nature (Marks & Spencer excels at these) — or Snuggly Bunny soft-handle synthetics decorated with cuddly creatures, the sort of nightwear favoured, you imagine, by the people who put Valentine's Day adverts in the papers. If this is your thing, Bhs has acres of it. Last — and most disturbing, if I'm right about the Brits, their nightwear and their sex lives — there is the Prep School pyjama, in plaid brushed cotton, crying out for the addition of a Cash's name tape.

Of the scores of nighties I examined, the one I liked best was, of course, beautiful, impractical and expensive: Malizia's fine, pin-tucked cream silk crêpe, reduced to £145 (from £225) at Barkers in Kensington. Austin Reed has less wildly expensive silk nightgowns in cream (and hard-to-wear ice-cream pink), at £59. A chemise is £39.95 and pyjamas are £89 — the prices include a padded-silk hanger.

If you like looking sporty in bed, Calvin Klein's grey and burgundy cotton jersey nightshirt, reduced to £25 at Barkers, is good quality. His turquoise pyjamas with a ballet wrap top trimmed with cream lace (also in grey, with black trim) are more feminine and cost £23 each for the top and leggings (reduced from £35). A pure white cotton jersey nightdress by Donna Karan, £60, is beautiful but has its fate written all over it. After you wear it for the second time you will put it in the washing machine with your son's rugger kit and turn it into a £60 duster.

A similar look, though without the magic Karan name, can be found at Bhs, where a long, white cotton jersey robe is £17 (£22), and a short one with a discreet embroidered clock motif is £11 (£22). I also liked its china-blue plaid dressing gown with a white cotton jersey lining (£17.50) and a generous white towelling robe with a satin jacquard ribbon trim, £28. If you don't mind the whiff of school dorm, pale *blue* and *mauve* brushed-cotton pyjamas are cosy at £14 (£20).

Lurking among the terrifying "relax-at-home" lounge wear at M&S are some pretty things. If you can bear to sleep in viscose, floor-length cream or pale blue jersey gowns are admirably free from fussy detail. For summer there is a pretty bias-cut slip nightgown in china-blue viscose georgette with a delicate trellis of darker blue flowers. A longer nightdress is £24 and a robe £50.

The trouble with *all* these things was that — with the exception of Bhs's cotton jersey robe — there was nothing to make the heart leap the way a really good chainstore find ought. Perhaps, having retained such starry names as Owen Gaster and Julien McDonald to raise the profile of their daywear, the big chains might consider finding some equally impressive talent to shake the moths out of their nightwear departments which offer too little that is not tarty, masculine or infantile. Perhaps then they will be able to match the flair of Knickerbox, whose pearl-grey silk with black velvet straps £25 (£35) is enlivening my bedtime.

Objects of desire

■ In her spare time, interior designer Virginie Brisset creates the most intricate jewellery. Strung on barely there fishing line, her beaded necklaces are so delicate that they look as if they have been suspended in air. Necklaces range from the avant-garde to the discreet. V&A jewellery is priced from £80. Available from Tokio and Jess James (0171-259 0078).



■ Organic in shape, these orchid-inspired salt and pepper dishes, £60, mould together, while the sculptured miniature spoons nestle perfectly in their grooves. Sarah Jordan (0181-444 2331)

HOT TIP

Stop tearing your hair out, blax bands have come to the rescue. Made from a thin strip of Latex, they are snag-free, do not pull or cause headaches, and are easy to remove without taking all your hair as well. They are 4mm wide and there are eight in a pack (available in black or transparent) for £2.50. Mr Mascara at Selfridges or Beauty Quest mail order (0541-505 000)

We have ways of making you the same



MAN ON TOP

JOE JOSEPH

More and more of us in Britain are realising that it no longer makes sense to struggle on alone in Europe. Why employ an army of Whitehall *mandarins* to mess up the running of our economy, when — as members of the European Union — we can hand over administration to Brussels, from the French *Bruxelles*, meaning "place where commission staff have expertise in *mismanaging finances* on a scale which would be hard for any member country to achieve on its own"?

Last week saw the launch of the euro, a *currency* which — even though banknotes are not yet available for use in shops — has already gained the enthusiastic support of millions of men and women from one end of Germany to the other.

This week Germany's Foreign Minister said he was pressing ahead with plans to harmonise taxes across Europe — even though Bonn had assured Tony Blair at the Vienna summit last month that uniform tax rates were not on the EU's agenda. What Blair didn't realise is that this was a sample of German humour, which will soon become the harmonised humour standard right across Europe, thereby enabling all of us in Britain, Italy and Spain to enjoy success *with our joke-telling* as frequently as Germans do: which is about 6 per cent of the time.

Eurohumour will be one of many new facets of European harmonisation aimed at making it easier for us to roam from country to country without cross-border confusion. Among the others will be:

NAMES: Just as we have all grown too busy to bother with *bureaux de change*, and will soon be able to avoid them altogether by using euros, the Commission is drafting parallel plans for a list of Euronames. These will fall harmoniously on the ears of all Europeans, thus eliminating those linguistic national boundaries. During a transitional phase, each member state will nominate two names — one male, one female (for example, Pierre and Françoise, Giorgio and Paola) — the goal being to harmonise these within three years to just *one Euro boy's name* and one Euro girl's name.

Only then — finally! — will we be able to hail our fellow Europeans without the formality of awkward introductions, knowing that whether we're in Rome or in Rotherham we can greet strangers as either Helmut or Helga without fear of feeling foolish or causing offence.

LANGUAGE: Harmonisation plans are well advanced here, too, though nothing drastic is in prospect. However, as a homage to Eugene Ionesco, whose play *The Lesson* foresaw much of the surreal humour which gives Brussels its tang, commissioners have agreed to introduce by the year 2005 a new Eurolanguage to simplify communication: for example, the Euroword for Paris will be Brussels.

WEATHER: Shifting temperatures from one member state to the next are a thorn in the side of travellers, who end up having to carry far more changes of clothes than should be necessary if the Euroweather system were more rational. Moves will be made to stabilise temperatures across the EU.

HEALTH: To avoid the organisational havoc caused by unplanned outbreaks of ill-health (look at flu in Britain today!), infections will be harmonised across Europe, with each EU citizen being notified by Brussels exactly which disease he is authorised to contract (and when), thus avoiding the sort of hospital-bed congestion that is so enraging Frank Dobson.

SERVICES: Citizens of the EU are entitled to expect the same standard of services throughout the community. For example, when collecting clothing from a dry-cleaner, a member of the public *has a right to expect that* — regardless of whether he is collecting the garment from a dry-cleaner in Madrid or in Munich — it will have acquired at least one new stain.

CRIME: Brussels applauds Jack Straw's announcement that burglars who persist in fleecing members of the public will receive mandatory minimum sentences. EU Commissioners are keen to see this approach replicated across Europe — excluding, obviously, any commission offices in Brussels.

SPORT: Competitive sport has done much to fuel the animosities that still divide member nations. So Brussels hopes soon to publish the rulebook of a new Eurosport which will blend all the best elements of member countries' national games (such as soccer, cricket, pétanque) into one harmonised sport. This sport — provided you *follow all the rules diligently* — promises to be astonishingly dull.

On the plus side, participants will not be required to shell out on expensive official team shirts and Nike footwear: in fact the game will be open to anyone who has an old pair of lederhosen and an Alpine hat hanging about the house.

That's just a taste. Believe me, it won't be long before you feel like a true European — fit, attractive, full of vim, just like Helmut Kohl.

Desperately seeking poshness

Clawing your way into the upper classes is the social obsession of our times, says **Wendy Holden**, who travelled from Cleckheaton to *Tatler*



DES JENSON

On the up: Wendy Holden was inspired by the 1981 royal wedding, the example of Vera Brittain, and early Eighties television dramas to infiltrate high society

Forget the Internet, don't worry about the millennium bug. All you need to get you safely into the next century is a cut-glass accent and a Coutts account. Reinventing yourself — in particular, passing yourself off as posher than you really are — is not only a *grand old British tradition* stretching from Rex Harrison to Hugh Grant but the social skill *par excellence* of our times.

Just look at the future wife of Prince Edward — her father, Chris, inserted a hyphen to make Jones sound smarter. Not to mention Peter Mandelson, who, until his recent spectacular fall, was the high priest of parvenus. And the good news is that, with a little practice and care — and avoidance of injudicious loans — it is within the reach of practically everyone to pass themselves off as posh. I know because I did it myself.

Picture, if you will, the sitting room of my parents' Yorkshire bungalow just under a year ago. My father, a printer, and my mother, a secretary, were gathered with my brother, who, as his blackened fingernails attested, had just knocked off after six days' hard labour under an articulated lorry in a Bradford garage. I, meanwhile, had flounced into my home town fresh from my deputy editor's desk at the society glossy, *Tatler*. I had some momentous news for them — my first novel, *Simply Divine*, a ritzy romp about upmarket

> I thought flats were *just what* old people ended up in

folk and glossy magazines, had been sold for a generous advance and was to be published.

Given that my father was a Methodist from Elland in West Yorkshire, my mother a former member of the Halifax Plymouth Brethren (a breakaway sect whose members considered ordinary Methodism sybaritic) and the only headlines any of the family had previously made were when my great-uncle was run over by a carthorse in Wyke, the sort of novel I might have been expected to attempt would have been a version of *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*.

Except that in our house it would have been *Cling Peaches Are Not The Only Fruit*; the amount we got through probably kept the man from Del Monte in business throughout the Seventies. My mother's interest in cooking, as she was the first and most vociferous to agree, was limited. She had, admittedly, little encouragement from Dad, who regards any rice not in tins marked Ambrosia with profound suspicion.

There are many subtle social checks and balances to prevent people like me — a northern comprehensive schoolgirl — infiltrating ultra-Sloaneland as number two on the self-styled poshest magazine in the country. How did I manage to do it? Or, as my family all-too-obviously wondered, why?

It began with the royal wedding of 1981. As the rest of the nation swooned over the Princess of Wales, I fell in love with her background. Until that moment, I had never suspected the existence of Sloanes — you didn't get many of them in Cleckheaton. I was riveted to learn that Diana lived in a flat, which, in the house-obsessed culture I knew, was something that old people ended up in. However, after poring for hours over *The People*, I worked out that Di's three-bedroom Earls Court apartment differed in fundamental ways from Gran's sheltered accommodation in Elland.

Television also had a lot to do with it. Social aspiration was in the very airwaves of the early Eighties. They were practically rigid with upmarket dramas: *Edward and Mrs Simpson*; *Love in a Cold Climate*; *Brideshead Revisited*; *To Serve Them All My Days*; the Radley College series; *Testament of Youth*. The latter became my bible; Vera Brittain's determination to escape from obscurity to academic glory fired and inspired me. If Vera could get to Oxford despite being stuck in Buxton with no one to teach her Greek responsions (whatever they were), I could have a stab at Cambridge from my Cleckheaton bedroom.

And, like Vera, I had at least half an eye out for the public schoolboys I might meet there. Elegant, epigrammatical, impossibly glamorous, half Oscar Wilde, half Nick Heyward, they peopled my dreams all summer until the glorious first day of my Cambridge term dawned.

I was in for a bitter disappointment. My college, Girton, was stronger on anoraked northern chemists than it was on the gilded youth of Eton and Harrow. The college's token Old Etonian was very pleasant, but his strong resemblance to Tintin and preference for frayed shirts and holey jumpers (shabby chic and I were then many years apart) rather took the edge off his attraction. Where, oh where, was Anthony Andrews? I began to look farther afield but most Wills and Dariuses, I quickly discovered, were just as unprepossessing as the Waynes and Darrens that I had left behind. Some of them were a good deal worse.

By the end of university, I had become aware of such niceties as signet rings and the fact that downstairs loos were the proper place for graduation photographs, cartoons of oneself, framed invitations — everything, in fact, that the upper middle classes wished they could put in the drawing room but did not dare. I learnt to say "rum" instead of "room" and to say "practically" practically all the time.

Admittedly, this was not too much of a leap. My Yorkshire accent was never, even as a child, very strong, despite the fact that you could stand a spoon up in that of my parents and brother.

After Cambridge, the upmarket trend of my life continued through a series of jobs on small, smart publications. First was *Apollo*, an art magazine where I hastily adjusted my tea-drinking habits after the secretary's sniffy remarks about "MIF people" (Milk In First). Then came a four-year stint on a magazine for diplomats, punctuated by numerous rigidly formal dinner parties at which I finally worked out which side the bread plate was on. Then followed *Harpers & Queen*, *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times*, where, in the course of researching a feature article, I was thrilled to discover the existence of the hopelessly infra-dig "PLT" category of people (Pardon, Lounge, Toilet).

Useful information as this was for my next job, as the deputy editor of *Tatler*, I had by then realised that taking such rules at all seriously was ridiculous, not to mention chronically unsmart. Just as well — *Tatler* was home to a number of sacred

> I learnt to say 'rum' instead of 'room'

social cows who, in earlier days, would have stampeded all over me. Chief among their favoured distinctions was that between upper and lower-class legs. The former, I was astonished to learn, were thin with the knee-joint equidistant between hip bone and ankle bone; the latter fat with a long thigh.

But by then I had made the crucial breakthrough, which was not just realising that all the above was fantastic material for a novel, but working out that most people I came across were as self-invented as I was. They had to be — if everyone were as grand as they seemed, the upper classes would be by far the largest demographic group in the country. As it is, the *faux* nobs may yet be.

As we head into the 21st century, the national obsession with class shows no sign of abating (witness the recent fuss over the new social categories), and the ability to be a social chameleon has never been more useful. At a time when, despite our much-vaunted new democracy, even the tabloids are full of the antics of aristocrats, familiarity with the argot of the stylish and wealthy is practically essential for basic comprehension.

But, happily, not for everybody. "I liked your book," Dad said to me, "but there was something I didn't understand. That character that everybody kept popping in to see. Never said anything but seemed to be very popular. What was she called? Prada, was it?"

● *Wendy Holden is Senior Editor of* You *magazine*, The Mail On Sunday. *Her first novel*, Simply Divine, *was published on January 14 by Headline, £10.*

Charlie is now Tony's best man

If a computer could design the antithesis of Peter Mandelson, it would be Lord Falconer of Thoroton: Charlie to his friends, and pretty well anyone else who meets him. It's a tale of two *Godfathers* — Peter would be perfect as the lean, mean *consigliere* in the film, Charlie ideal as a fat and jolly figure at the christening.

Where Mr Mandelson is slim, immaculate and fashionable, Lord Falconer is rotund, rumpled and immune to style. He savours fine food and drink; Mr Mandelson sips hot water with a lemon slice. Lord Falconer mixes easily with anyone and nurtures no apparent social ambition; Mr Mandelson was always aware of the rung he inhabited, and enjoyed snubbing those below and flattering those above to speed his ascent.

So if Charlie Falconer is to some extent to replace Peter Mandelson at Tony Blair's right shoulder, what difference will it make? I say "to some extent", for the Prime Minister is hardly going to stop talking to his former Trade Secretary: the relationship runs too deep.

It was Mr Mandelson who, when Mr Blair was a bright, new backbencher, advised him to earn publicity by running a campaign against flammable foam-filled furniture. This was the perfect cause for a young MP. There were tragic case-studies for the tabloids; and it involved standing up for the consumer against the producer, a long-running Blair theme.

It was Mr Mandelson who nurtured the young Blair alongside the young Gordon Brown, as articulate, telegenic, middle-class voices for Labour. So it was not surprising that when the Labour leadership unexpectedly became vacant, there was still a mentor/protégé feel to the relationship, even though Mr Blair was by then technically the senior of the two. Mr Blair had been immersed in home affairs when John Smith died, and had barely had time to think about the bigger political picture. He needed help with tactics, presentation, policy and strategy. Mr Mandelson came to his aid.

Mary Ann Sieghart

How a relationship begins often colours the rest of its life. So, although Mr Blair has grown hugely in the job, and although Mr Mandelson became more deferential towards his former protégé, there was always going to be a relic of the dependency culture, so to speak. During the election campaign, Mr Blair phoned two men before taking any decision: Lord Irvine of Lairg and Mr Mandelson. Even though he has official advisers on whom he has grown to rely, the gap in his life must still seem immense.

But it was a dependency that Mr Mandelson was happy to encourage. He had risked all on this relationship: his position owed everything to Mr Blair's patronage. It was in his interest to try to undermine the Labour leader's confidence, to make him believe that he could not manage without his close adviser. Like an arsonist firefighter, Mr Mandelson tended to create dramas which he could then resolve — so that the Prime Minister would ask himself: "What would I do without Peter?"

This question may feel particularly acute now. My guess is that, in six months' time, it will have receded a little. When a parent, on whom you have always relied for advice and wisdom, dies, you fear you will never be able to cope. But only then do you realise the extent of your own inner resources. It takes the death of a parent for even an adult to grow up fully. Perhaps it takes the loss of an adviser and close friend for a Prime Minister to reach real maturity.

For, even if Mr Blair continues to talk to Mr Mandelson, he has lost the ability to ask him to do anything on his behalf. That is where Charlie Falconer comes in. And in many ways this other old friend may turn out to be an improvement on the last.

For a start, the Prime Minister trusts him absolutely. They have known each other for most of their lives, and Lord Falconer came into politics a little reluctantly and only to help out Mr Blair. His advice, therefore, is uncoloured by self-interest, since he has no ambition to lead the Labour Party and harbours no grudges against any of his new colleagues.

Indeed, nobody seems to dislike him, which is unusual for such a clever man. In all the publicity surrounding his elevation, there has not been a bad word said. That is because — again the antithesis of Mr Mandelson — Lord Falconer has an amiability, a modesty and a lack of side that endear him to most who meet him. He is even popular with MPs, who ought to resent the rapid rise of an unelected "crony".

If Mr Mandelson's instinct was to stir things up, Lord Falconer's is to calm things down. He gets the results he wants by asking questions rather than telling people what to do. The interlocutor is disarmed by this approach, and usually ends up arriving at the desired conclusion, hardly noticing that he has been corralled into it by a highly skilled sheepdog.

By wearing his power lightly, Lord Falconer has managed to avoid alienating other ministers. Although he is Jack Cunningham's deputy, he does most of the behind-the-scenes work, allowing Dr Cunningham to concentrate on the *Today* programme. By retaining due modesty about his deputy status, he has been able to resolve policy problems without humiliating the ministers concerned.

What a contrast with Mr Mandelson, whose favourite party trick was to interrupt a conversation by scrutinising his pager and saying "I must call Tony". The other difference lies in their approach to control. For a man so addicted to controlling others, it was odd that Mr Mandelson could not control his own desire to live grandly. But Lord Falconer is no natural disciplinarian.

So the Prime Minister has lost the man who did his dirty work. And that may be no bad thing. For a leader who is widely perceived as a good man risks being tainted by association with colleagues who pride themselves on their ruthlessness and deviousness. New Labour was supposed to presage a new politics. It is not too late to start.

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— IT HAS A VERY LOUD BARK AND CAN GIVE YOU A VERY NASTY SUCK.

The paper tiger folds

MEPs funked their golden chance to assert democratic power over Brussels

So much for the European Parliament. Yesterday, for the first time in 20 years, it made the Democracy League cup final. The Strasbourg crowd roared it on. The defence was in disarray. The goal was wide open. MEPs had the ball at their feet ... and they sent it soaring over the bar.

On the Jack Straw theory of punishment, every one of them should be taken out this morning and shot. We shall try to be more charitable. The MEPs were playing out of their class. These are the younger sons of democracy, packed off abroad with a sinecure, a mistress and a bag of gold to keep them quiet. They are paper tigers to flatter the Eurocrats, and paper democrats to flatter the federalists. The Council of Ministers, the real power-house of modern Europe, also likes to have them around. The European Parliament offers the illusion that someone is being paid to guard the Brussels shop. Even dictatorships have assemblies.

The original framers of the European Parliament constitution were no fools. They let it veto the budget, but knew that such action was unlikely. MEPs carry no responsibility for raising taxes. As a result, they have never knowingly voted to cut spending, any more than Brussels has ever asked them to do so. MEPs were also left to fix their own working methods, pay and expenses. This ensured that they would soon become a byword for perks, indolence, extravagance and greed. They were set up from the start as the Friar Tucks of European politics. They would not bite the hand that fed them.

As for real power, the Parliament was given the right only to vote down the 20-strong Commission en bloc. It could not sack individual commissioners, which would be far too inviting for safety. Corrupt commissioners could thus hide behind the cloak of collective responsibility. Yesterday the Parliament tried to censure Edith Cresson of France and Manuel Marín of Spain, whose alleged sins make those of Peter Mandelson seem petty. Jacques Santer said he and all his colleagues would resign if any were censured. A proper Parliament would have called this bluff. MEPs should have told Mr Santer that if he wanted to shield corruption, he should take the rap. Go ahead. Make our day. They lost their nerve.

Everyone with an intimate knowledge of the way Brussels disburses money, on aid, agriculture, regional development or consultancy, knows that it stinks. In October last year some Scandinavian and German MEPs tried to censure the Commission by refusing to "discharge" the 1996 budget. Their determination was galvanised by the evidence of an exasperated Commission auditor, Paul van Buitenen, sacked for sending scandalous material to the Green Party. The joke in Brussels is that the only people ever sacked are whistle-blowers and chefs. But even the normally sycophantic Brussels press could not ignore Mr van Buitenen.

Simon Jenkins

A troubled Commission put out a dense smokescreen. It tried to rubbish Mr van Buitenen. It pleaded that other bureaucracies were even more corrupt, including the Italians, the World Bank and the United Nations. It finally pledged to mend its ways, even with help from independent outsiders. It would investigate its own mismanagement, nepotism, sloppy contracts and fraud. The Parliament was initially unimpressed. Previous such promises paper the Commission's walls. There is a Court of Auditors. Each year it lists billions of pounds lost through theft and mismanagement, and goes home. Nothing is ever done.

What stopped the MEPs in their tracks was raw politics. A frantic appeal went out to national governments to protect their own commissioners by ordering their MEPs to stop playing the fool. Most MEPs owe their jobs to their ranking on party lists. These parties are headed by people who often include or are friends of individual commissioners. This is the real network of European power. Mr Santer, the tamest of political animals, did no more than snap his fingers and the MEPs ran for cover. The leader of the largest group, the Labour MEP Pauline Green, ran fastest of all. I can see why Tony Blair is keen to put her forward as London's mayor.

The threat of censure evaporated as swiftly as it arose. On Wednesday night the German MEPs were told not to rock the boat of the Socialist German presidency. The French were told not to force the sacking of the party's bruised commissioner, Mme Cresson. The Spanish were told to protect the dignity of their man, Señor Marín. Only the Scandinavians were ready to deliver the one discipline known to work on an entrenched, sleaze-ridden administration, summed up in the American maxim, "Chuck the buggers out". For the majority, the en-bloc rule and party discipline worked the requisite magic. The paper tiger rustled and went back to sleep.

A theory beloved of governments of every stripe is that corruption is best policed by themselves. This is fiction. Bureaucracies never reform themselves. Reform costs jobs, privileges and self-esteem. Easier by far to envelop oneself in secrecy and ensure that the revenue keeps flowing in and the subsidies flowing out. Had the Commission been left to its own devices last December, there would have been no revelations, only an honest auditor out of a job. Had this official not broken the Commission's secrecy rules, there would have been no crisis yesterday. Even so, we have only a mildly inconvenienced Commission and a humiliated Parliament. A good lunch should set both to rights.

These antics will confirm the scepticism of those genuine "pro-Europeans" who support free trade and an open continental economy, but who balk at closer political union. Who could want to do business with Mr Santer's corruption-sheltering Commission, or put faith in such a wimpish Parliament? They are like the institutions of the pre-Reformation Church. They may have seen an unusually boisterous Lateran Council, but the bishops were no more likely to dethrone the Pope than they were to cut their own stipends. The fabric of Mother Church trembles if the honesty of one cardinal is questioned. Once loose the dogs of censure and who know what Luther may emerge from the back streets of Wittenberg?

Responsibility for cleansing the government of Europe must now rest with the Council of Ministers, the rolling summit of leaders which forms Europe's policy collective. This is the proper conduit of democratic accountability. The Delors ideal of the Brussels Commission as the embodiment of continental unity has failed. It has proved too weak, too unaccountable and certainly too incompetent. Further expansion will bring aboard the even murkier apparatchiks of Eastern Europe. In its present form the Commission has surely had its day.

The Council of Ministers is composed of members answerable to domestic parliaments. It is the proper institution to carry out the obligations of the Maastricht treaty and handle the consequences of monetary union. It alone holds authority over the Commission. It should be the sensor and lightning conductor of public opinion on what further steps, if any, should be taken to closer union. I would far rather entrust Britain's interests in Europe to an elected Prime Minister and Cabinet, warts and all, than to a cosmopolitan gaggle of MEPs.

What of the MEPs themselves? For two decades this luxurious caravanserai has neglected to hold the Commission to account. Yesterday circumstances offered it a golden chance to flex its muscles and assert democratic sovereignty over Brussels. It funked it. Just as there appears no way of reforming the Commission, so there is no way of reforming the Parliament. Both are spent institutions.

Yet such supranational bodies seem to enjoy immortality. Nobody knows how to wind them up. They do not die. They merely move to limbo in Geneva. There they live on, ignored, paranoid but pampered, like the occupants of a Thomas Mann sanatorium. Nobody asks questions. Somebody pays the bill. The sun rises each day over the lovely lake and sets behind the glorious mountain. The MEPs are about to move from Strasbourg to Brussels to be "closer" to the Commission. They are going in the wrong direction to the wrong city.

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Road rage

ENCOURAGING vandals is the latest trumped-up charge against Peter Mandelson. After I disclosed that his neighbours were fed up with hordes of door-stepping journo Johnnies, I discover he has caused even greater fear at his old joint. When living at his home-alone pad in Islington's Wilmington Square, his quiet nights in were disrupted by a rat-run. After badgering the council, he had the road rerouted.

Peace descended, inflating property prices which gave Mandelson a nice deposit for his palace in Notting Hill. But Wilmington Square has become a cul-de-sac that attracts gangsters who have alarmed locals and even burnt an ornamental pagoda in the gardens. Here, sympathy for the old devil's predicament is rather scant.

● *THE modesty of Nicole Kidman. Her new licence plate? "A LIST!"*

Fit for Prince

RUMOURS about Prince William, in the sixth form at Eton, reach my ears from Oxford. Security at Lincoln College, where Eric Anderson is the Rector, has been brushed up. Apart from being Tony Blair's "favourite teacher" at Fettes, Anderson taught the Prince of Wales at Gordonstoun and was Head Master of Eton when William first donned his stiff collar, so it would be comforting for the young chap — particularly since Zara Phillips, his cousin (pictured with William), is thought to be considering St Anne's College. It was suggested the Prince would follow his father to Trinity College, Cambridge, but a tutor at Lincoln told students that Buck Palace goons did a safety check at Christmas. Anderson, admitting that Lincoln has installed closed-circuit TV, insists its "purely routine".



● TATLER *going common: after the sad retirement of Ewa Lewis, the magazine is to appoint a second social editor who will cover the North. "How new Britain," I exclaimed. "Debs' parties in Macclesfield!" "Good God no. By the North we mean Edinburgh."*

Union blows

FISTICUFFS at union HQ, where John Edmonds, the suave blade who runs the GMB, dismissed Tom Condon who was showing rather too much interest in the *byzantine operations of the union's* pension fund. Edmonds called back Mick Fisher from retirement.

Two days on Fisher precipitated a threatened walkout by the GMB's 90 staff over claims that he shoved a colleague. Edmonds promises one of those "full inquiries".



"Yes, but is it also Prime Minister-free?"

● *TONY BANKS is keen to run as Ken Livingstone's deputy for mayor. He took Ken aside in the House yesterday, and said quietly: "The more I think about it, the more sense it makes. If you only want one term I could move in afterwards and clean up. I'd look after sports and arts stuff and you could look after the Golden Coat." Livingstone is rather ungrateful for the ministerial offer: "Tony's saying that because he's realised that the Government think he's only marginally more reliable than me."*

Double win

AN ACTOR in *Tommy* has done well out of the show, even though his denouement involved jumping off a pinball machine singing *Pinball Wizard*. Hal Fowler has sued producers for £24,000 for a knee injury after bagging the leading lady, Kim Wilde.

JASPER GERARD

"Hang on Attic — there's far more to puns and word games than meets the I"

Philip Howard

"Sir, Why do you persist in aping the tutter gabloids by in creasing the puns in your headlines? Disappunted, One Bridge Tells." Complaints about puns are the second most pungent complaint newspapers receive from whingers, who claim (unpersuasively) to have been reading *The Times* all their lives, and to be chucking it in because they have reached the paronomasia of no return. (The most pungent complaint points out error with glee.)

The soft answer to turn away such froth is "Gosh, terribly sorry, must ply harder". A sparkier answer is that sub-editors lead such boring lives, checking other people's facts and spellings, cutting the first and last sentences, and removing all jokes, that they must be allowed their inch of fun. A more sensible reply is that because they compress at least two meanings into one word, puns make valuable shorthand for headlines. A sharp answer would be that only the Plain English Society, and other totalitarians and Roundheads think that a word can or should have a single meaning.

But hang on half Attic. Isn't Wit the Salt? The truthful answer is that puns and such wordplay are basic to language. Wittgenstein found a useful way of looking at language as games: Olympic games, board games, team games, game parks, fun and games. Compare and contrast. In his latest book, *Language Play*, David Crystal, the logophile, argues that children learn to talk and write by wordplay, and that even the dullest dogs use language in a ludic way. If a dog could speak, it would not understand what it was saying. Discuss.

Noisily, headline writers and advertising copywriters deconstruct language to catch our attention. From Tom Stoppard to Monty Python, and from James Joyce to Shakespeare, professionals have fun with language. I have reviewed a book consisting of nothing but 1,600 puns in Milton, of all improbable funsters. Auden said good poets have a weakness for bad puns. "Suffoclose Shikespower Seudodante Anonymoses" in *Finnegans Wake* is based on Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dante, and that prolific poet Anon. But there is more in it than meets the I. Perhaps the grain of corruption that runs through even the most beautiful things.

Children love linguistic ambiguities. Think of the series of "schoolboy" jokes such as Knock, Knock..."Isabella on a Bicycle?" And Tom Swifties. "I'm glad I remembered my umbrella, said Tom drily."

Think also of anagrams. Margaret Thatcher makes "that great charmer" or "Meg, the arch tartar", depending upon your taste in politicians and wordplay.

Moreover. What is "zigazig ha!" (the climax of *Wannabe!*, the hit that launched the Spice Girls). "No cool monsoons blow soft on Oxford dons" is a magical line from an epic univocalic (using only one vowel) poem. Georges Perec's *La Disparation* is a lipogram, a novel that avoids "e" throughout. It was translated as *A Void*, also sending the most common letter in the language to Covntry, which is chating. So th' unmntionabl vowl had bttr b snt to Birmingham.

The editor, sitting at a bar, is accosted by a prostitute: "Hiya, big boy! Whatcha drinking?" Ed: "Chocolate milk." She leaves in disgust. Ed: "Abstinence makes the tart go yonder." Ba-boom. A triple pun to make his chocolate milk curdle.

The Bible is not a lot of laughs. But the most famous of all puns, Peter/the rock, is a cornerstone of Christianity, even though Christ cannot have made it in the *koine*, common Greek. But the Old Testament is thick with puns too. Jacob's name comes from the word for "heel" (he was born hanging on to his twin Esau's heel). Jacob was Heel by name and nature.

Ludic language echoes a deep-rooted element in the human condition. God was the first logonaut. And Homer was his captain. All good poetry and most good headlines exploit the ambiguities of language. Language is the single most important art that distinguishes man from other animals. It is the great game, the most humane and democratic of games.



ALL FLOATING NOW

Blair looks out at a changing British electorate

One of Tony Blair's more endearing qualities is a certain candour. In his directness with the Labour Party he often reveals much about his own perceptions of public opinion. This is not simply a matter of allowing the work of the focus group or the strategist a wider audience. It is fundamental to the Prime Minister's approach to politics. In his speech to the Institute for Public Policy Research yesterday Mr Blair identified what he considered to be the critical aspect of the electorate. This is "a new, larger, more meritocratic middle class" that has "greater tolerance of difference, ambition to succeed, greater opportunities to earn a decent living". The new middle class could, Mr Blair mused, maintain his party in power for a decade.

The evidence for a country less shaped by class than consumerism is not difficult to assemble. In the 1950s some 95 per cent of the electorate supported one of the two major parties, the national trend in a contest was faithfully reflected across the overwhelming majority of constituencies, and social class explained the party preferences of more than four fifths of voters. All other factors were, as Peter Pultzer of Oxford University bluntly put it at the time, "embellishment and detail".

None of this has been true in the 1990s. A quarter of the public consistently resists the charms of both Conservatives and Labour. A record 7 per cent in 1997 did not vote for any of the three mainstream parties. As a consequence 75 MPs sit in the House of Commons in neither the red nor blue corners, the highest such figure since 1923. In recent decades there have been extraordinarily diverse results across even adjacent and apparently similar constituencies. Although citadels such as Beaconsfield and Bootle still exist, the broader pattern has been a shift away from class-based allegiances. At the last election Labour outscored the Conservatives among the middle classes and homeowners. It would appear that we are all floating voters now.

The historians would urge some caution before hailing the era of the democratic supermarket. It could be argued that the period of class-dominated elections in the two decades after 1945 were the exception not the rule of British politics. Before then region, religion and contemporary controversies had more impact at the polls. An alternative camp would argue that the middle-class electorate and an allied ascendancy of affluence over ideology has been predicted before and disappeared just as quickly. When economic discontent arose the new consumerism fell apart. Others fear that far too much is being read into the extremely unusual 1997 campaign.

Even in a benign bourgeois Britain a significant section of voters will still prefer sausage rolls to sun-dried tomatoes. In the short term these electors will almost certainly remain loyal to the Labour Party despite its increasing distance from their interests. It should not be assumed that there are no alternatives. One disturbing option, outright abstention, is already increasing. In Scotland, the SNP shows some sign of successfully occupying the space to the left of Labour. The introduction of proportional representation for Westminster might, ironically, do more damage to Mr Blair than to the Tories.

An electorate dominated by an expanding but more diverse middle class will offer its own complexities. It will hold political positions — hostility to excessive tax, empathy to minorities — that cut across traditional party lines. Mr Blair has been more than willing to adjust to what he believes to be electoral reality. His party has less enthusiasm for the process of realignment. William Hague appears torn between his own recognition of a changing country and the stark reluctance of most Conservatives to acknowledge the same.

The most powerful challenge lies not in understanding the electorate but in delivering what is needed. This is especially true when governments are confronted with shifting and contradictory desires. Even in new conditions the purpose of elections will be, in the words of the late Senator Barry Goldwater, to present "a choice not an echo". Leadership, as Mr Blair well knows, remains the essence of British political life.

SMOKE OVER FREETOWN

When diamonds make the rich poorer

Thirty years ago Sierra Leone had one of the most promising futures in Africa. Small, stable, ethnically homogeneous and with a population that had made the most of opportunities under British rule, the country seemed assured of prosperity. Agriculture was well developed and Sierra Leone possessed an inestimable wealth in diamonds. By the 1950s it was the world's most mainsource of gem quality diamonds.

Today the mines lie abandoned, wrecked by battles between marauding rebels, mercenaries and government forces. Freetown, the capital, is burning, looted by the retreating rebels. Those who emerged from their homes during yesterday's uncertain ceasefire are desperate for food. In the countryside terrified villagers await the vengeance of men and even children with machetes who hack off the arms of anyone resisting their plunder. Sierra Leone now comes absolute bottom of various United Nations indices of global poverty. By any measure, it would seem to be a failed state.

Complete breakdown, with the country divided between feuding warlords and no government able to exercise authority beyond the capital, would be a catastrophe — not just for Sierra Leoneans, but for all West Africa. If the rebels were to win, and the democratic government were ousted despite the intervention of Ecomog, the Nigerian-led West African force, the repercussions in the region would be serious. Nigeria has now committed a quarter of its army to Ecomog at a cost of $1 million a day. Nigeria's new military leadership, boldly charting a return to democracy, fears that defeat there could see the return of an embittered, disillusioned force that might be the focus for those who would thwart a return to democratic rule.

However grim the picture looks now, failure is not predestined. A second ousting of President Kabbah would further erode the cliff-face of democracy that has been crumbling for years. But there is international determination to prevent this. Britain has already spent £30 million over the past 12 months in emergency aid to support reconstruction and demobilisation. It has spent a further £4 million in non-lethal military support, delivering the latest batch of radios and equipment to Ecomog yesterday.

Direct western intervention is out of the question. But the malign intervention of opportunist neighbours — especially Liberia — backing the rebels must be stopped. So too must the involvement of mercenaries, European and African, reliably reported to be fighting with the rebels. They are lured there by the promise of diamond riches, the magnet for unscrupulous businessmen, arms salesmen and marauders from around the world.

If the rebel advance can be reversed, recovery is possible. Resources are abundant. The older generation is well educated. There is still respect for democracy; the restraint of the reinstated Government and generally fair trials of the ousted junta have been encouraging. President Kabbah has not so far proved a capable leader, but the symbolism of his democratic election is still important. It will be a costly and long struggle. But for the sake of all West Africa, Sierra Leone must not be allowed to fail.

ROYAL BOUNTY

The Palace presents its treasures to the nation

Royal patronage has long coaxed craftsmen into displays of talent. Regal temperaments have long been flattered by exquisite gifts of art. And sovereign egos have always been boosted by the accretion of cultural wealth. Throughout their histories, Europe's royal families accumulated magnificent art collections. But where those of the Romanovs or the Habsburgs were long ago bequeathed to the state, the British Monarchy still holds responsibility for its Royal Collection. Although the Queen, as a private individual, does not own the artworks, as Sovereign she holds them, somewhat ambiguously, in trust for the nation. The plans announced yesterday to build a public art gallery at Buckingham Palace in which works of the Royal Collection will be displayed should be heralded, then, as an important step in the monarchy's process of modernisation. But for art lovers it will also offer a precious opportunity to pore over the treasures of one of the world's richest troves.

The Royal Collection, accrued mainly since the Restoration — although a few items from earlier reigns survived Cromwellian dispersal — contains a wealth of Old Masters, representing every European school of painting from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Portraits, drawings, miniatures and prints by artists as revered as Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Van Dyck and Vermeer are all included, alongside enamels, textiles, porcelain, furniture and a Fabergé collection. Several artworks are on indefinite loan to national museums. Others may be admired by the public in Britain's royal houses and palaces. But show spaces are scarce. What the Palace's projected development will offer is a permanant public show space offering a changing display in an area of the building which at present is little used.

The witty architectural extension, its entrance rotunda mimicking the tent which George IV erected to celebrate the Treaty of Paris, is intended to blend pastiche with the contemporary demands of a spacious gallery. Tailoring itself to the John Nash façade, it will reflect the Royal Family's concern for tradition, while offering the curious, for the first time, a peek at the palace gardens. The increased tourist revenue which this gallery will attract should, within a few years, cover the £15 million cost of the project. An already over-burdened Government art budget will not be further taxed. Rather, if the development is completed, as intended, on time for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, this imaginative project will present itself as a celebratory gift of a Sovereign to her nation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Birthright of a German citizen

From the Dean of Merton College

Sir, German citizenship law is indeed ripe for change (leading article, January 12). But it is wrong to associate it with Nazism. Long before the Nazis crept out of their holes, Germany held the principle of *jus generis* (citizenship by descent), by which the children of Germans inherited German nationality even if born abroad. This was not racialism. Jews had been Prussian burghers since 1812.

When Prussia and other states merged into united Germany in 1871, German citizenship embraced the French, Danes and Poles within Germany's borders. *Jus generis* made sense in those days. It has proved a blessing in obliging Germany to grant asylum after the Second World War to refugees whose German ancestors had settled in the East in happier times.

To the framers of the German law code a century ago, British *jus soli* (citizenship by right of place of birth) seemed anomalous. Why should a child accidentally born in Britain become British even if its foreign parents took it home the next day? They could not foresee a modern society that needs immigrants and must treat them fairly.

Today, *jus soli* has turned out a good investment. But the Germans, in adopting some form of it, should not forsake *jus generis*. Nor should it lose its recent foothold here. Officialdom has been all too slow to accord rights to those of British stock born overseas.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS BRAUN,
Dean, Merton College,
Oxford OX1 4JD.
thomas.braun@merton.ox.ac.uk
January 12.

Value of new drugs is above price

From Professor Sir John Vane, FRS, Professor G. V. R. Born, FRS, and Professor L. L. Iversen, FRS

Sir, The additional funds for health assigned by the Government in the last spending review confirmed a welcome priority for healthcare, not only in its own right but as a major factor in the national economy. These funds will support research in academia and in the research councils; but a similar boost to industry, which funds its own research, is also necessary.

In the pharmaceutical industry, in particular, far-sighted companies spend up to 25 per cent of their sales on R&D each year and this can only be recovered in the prices charged for new medicines. There is a legitimate concern that preoccupation with cost, as in the rather special cases of Viagra and Xenical, will distract from the value of innovative new medicines, and that this will indirectly discourage therapeutic research.

Pharmaceutical research in this country has proved extraordinarily fruitful. Five of the world's current top 20 medicines have been discovered here, with tremendous benefits to healthcare generally, to individual patients, and to the UK economy. We need to discover and develop new drugs for preventing and curing previously untreatable diseases, as well as for improving existing treatments.

Drugs effective against infectious diseases, peptic ulcers and mental illness have greatly reduced the numbers and the duration of hospital admissions. These conditions, together with nine others, today account for only 22 per cent of hospital-bed occupancy, compared with 40 per cent in 1957. Then the average stay in hospital was 45 days, whereas today it is eight days. But just one week in hospital costs the NHS more than £1,100. So there is still much to be achieved.

The UK loses 187 million working days a year through ill-health, at a direct cost to employers of £12 billion as well as £8 billion to the social services through sickness benefit.

As British medical research scientists, we urge the Government and others concerned with managing our immensely valuable health service to continue to support the discovery and development of new medicines. At least initially, they are bound to cost more, but the price of a new medicine from a research-based organisation carries within it a contribution towards the cost of discovering the next.

This is part of the slow but steady progress which has characterised the first half-century of the NHS.

Yours truly,
JOHN VANE,
Honorary President,
The William Harvey Research Institute,
G. V. R. BORN
(Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, King's College, University of London),
LESLIE IVERSEN
(Visiting Professor of Pharmacology, University of Oxford).
The William Harvey Research Institute,
Charterhouse Square, EC1M 6BQ.
January 14.

Ethnic humour may pall in time

From Mrs Carol Madison Graham

Sir, The use of humour to deal with ethnic and racial stereotypes has a longer history in the United States than your editorial (January 9) on the Asian comedy *Goodness Gracious Me* suggests. Racial humour in the US has not been confined to radio and television shows but also exists in many films, and of course on the stand-up comedy circuit. And, as with any humorous subject, the more scandalous or intense the topic the funnier the material.

Richard Pryor's superb sketches were shown a good 30 years ago on US television to audiences horrified by racial violence on the nightly news. During the more recent Los Angeles riots, shows such as *In Living Colour* repeated the recipe. In between such crises US racial humour continues and is, as you point out, a way of mocking racial stereotypes, black and white.

However, Britain may find, as the US has, that the theme of the funny stranger in a strange land wears thin. *Goodness Gracious Me* — a funny, well-acted comedy which is succeeding with a diverse audience — may one day go the way of US comedies of the 1970s, such as *The Jeffersons* or *Watermelon Man*. Much of their humour was based on the assumption that the ethnic minority did not really belong in mainstream society, which it had no role in defining.

With luck, in 20 years this theme will be seen as old hat in Britain and audiences will no longer understand the racial stereotyping the programme lampoons.

Yours sincerely,
C. A. M. GRAHAM,
14 Leinster Avenue, SW14 7JP.
January 9.

Community care and gun control

From Lieutenant-Commander D. L. Thomas, RN (retd)

Sir, You report (January 6) on research by two forensic psychiatrists for the Institute of Psychiatry showing that "there is no evidence to support the notion that care in the community has made society a more dangerous place". This may be so; but it remains a fact that homicide committed by mentally ill people released into the community is a persistent and alarming feature of modern life.

Studies by the Zito Trust and by the Department of Psychiatry at Manchester University have found — conservatively — that such events occur at the rate of about 25 per year, or one every two weeks. This gives a total of over 500 since the care in the community policy came into operation some 25 years ago.

The true total is almost certainly higher, and public disquiet is reinforced by the knowledge that many of these killings were essentially random, with the victim being quite unconnected with the perpetrator.

By contrast, and so far as I can ascertain, the number of persons unlawfully killed by the legal owners of licensed firearms does not exceed 150 this entire century — ie, between one and two per year. Of that number some 33 were accounted for by the Hungerford and Dunblane massacres; the rest were almost all ordinary domestic murders where the choice of weapon used was not particularly significant.

Naturally, the steady trickle of single homicides by the mentally ill released into the community does not have the same capacity to shock or provoke a media feeding frenzy as do wholly untypical multiple disasters; but the victims are just as dead, and the bereaved are just as distressed.

Yours sincerely,
D. L. THOMAS,
Akroyd Cottage,
Abbey Park Lane, Burnham,
Buckinghamshire SL1 8PJ.
January 11.

Hooked on television

From Mr Peter Clegg

Sir, Your report (January 9) of the BBC's dilemma with the programmes fronted by Robert Kilroy-Silk and Vanessa Feltz is saddening; but the viewing figures reinforce my own views. While some of Kilroy's topics may be rather tiresome, the programme, if I am still seated after breakfast, is one I can find fairly compelling. In contrast, the first few moments of Vanessa Feltz cause me to displace the cat from my lap as quickly as I can to reach the television and switch off.

In the old days of music-hall at Barnard's and the Chatham Empire, when a performer was thought to be "not up to scratch" but was reluctant to leave the stage, the audience would call for "the hook" — a pole like an enlarged shepherd's crook. This would emerge from the wings anonymously, to be placed round the neck of the performer, who would be withdrawn, usually gently, but nonetheless firmly, from the stage.

Would not a similar device, of whatever size required, make for truly "interactive" television?

Yours faithfully,
PETER CLEGG,
34 Shore Road, Greenisland,
Carrickfergus, Co Antrim BT38 8UE.
January 9.

Brussels appointment

From Mr David Carlisle

Sir, Sir Roy Denman's opposition (letter, January 5) to the appointment of a Conservative as a European Commissioner, on the ground that Conservative policy is "to oppose not only British membership of the single currency ... but any of the further economic and political integration which will inexorably follow the euro", is only to be expected from a former Brussels official. It ignores the fact that Britain has an opt-out from the single currency.

That opt-out is, of course, enshrined in the Maastricht treaty; and one might expect Commissioners to uphold all treaty terms, not just those that coincide with the personal view of Commissioners. Indeed, an important task for a British Commissioner might well be to remind the European Community (and its officials) that it exists for the purposes of *all* its member states, and not just those who want to pursue the path of economic and monetary union.

Sir Roy compares appointing a Conservative as European Commissioner with selecting an atheist for a bishopric. A more apt analogy would be that of appointing as a bishop someone with the guts to counteract the tendency of his colleagues to wander off and become cardinals.

A *democratic* solution would be to appoint a Commissioner who is capable of reflecting the majority of British opinion.

It is also a little unclear how democracy requires appointing someone from a party which has never, in Paddy Ashdown's lifetime, represented more than a minority of voters. Indeed, if opinion polls indicate that, at least on Europe, Conservative policy is in line with the majority of British opinion, all the more reason to appoint a Conservative who upholds that policy.

I remain, Sir, yours, etc,
DAVID CARLISLE,
Stapleton Farmhouse, Stapleton,
Martock, Somerset TA12 6AN.
January 6.

Traffic in Oxford

From the Chief Transport Planner of Oxfordshire County Council

Sir, It is perhaps not surprising that those whose arguments were rejected following lengthy consideration at last year's transport inquiry in Oxford should now try to argue that the inquiry inspector was not independent and that the inquiry did not consider the wider impacts of Oxford central area changes (letters, December 18 and 31). This is simply not the case.

The inspector was selected from the list supplied by the DETR, and the fact that under the department's procedures he reported directly to the local authority does not make that report any less independent.

The inquiry spent many days looking at the wider traffic effects of the central area changes and how these have been addressed. As a result, and after many decades of debate, the city of Oxford has at last found a transport strategy which will deliver substantial improvements. This view was shared by the inquiry inspector, after hearing all the evidence.

Yours sincerely,
ROGER WILLIAMS,
Chief Transport Planner,
Oxfordshire County Council,
Environmental Services,
Speedwell House,
Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1NE.
January 5.

Council powers

From Mr Robert Jones

Sir, I believe Mr Freddie Emery-Wallis (letter, December 31) paints a romantic picture of the partnership between voters and their local government.

In my experience, at parish council level, it has proved increasingly difficult to find candidates and to persuade people to turn out to vote for them. At the level of the principal council, first the poll tax and now the council tax — its only slightly paler imitator — have alienated many voters, who regard local authorities as oppressive, irresponsible handlers of public money.

In general, the legacy of local government in this century is not impressive. Too often the record is one of short-sightedness, a degree of corruption, and seemingly blind indifference to the feelings and needs of local people.

To do away with the whole structure of local government would, I believe, cause not one tear to be shed except by those who enjoy exercising power over their local communities.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT JONES
(Party election agent, 1975-91),
28 Royal Exchange,
Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 2HN.
robertjones@hedera98.freeserve.co.uk
January 3.

Liquid intake

From the Reverend Dr James Bentley

Sir, I must take issue with my dear friend, colleague and former curate, the Reverend Peter Mullen, who suggests (letter, January 7) that the advice, "Drink more fluids", is a tautology or pleonasm.

Drinking is but one way of absorbing fluids. One can inject them. Hamlet's father and Socrates both took them in by way of their ears. Some are impregnated with them. What about intravenous drips? And don't we eat soup?

Yours sincerely,
JAMES BENTLEY,
6 Arborfield Close,
Slough, Berkshire SL1 2JW.
January 7.

Keeping company

From Mrs Helena Peacock

Sir, I was astonished to read that female Labour MPs have taken exception to Sir David Gore-Booth's description of British women in Saudi Arabia as "company wives" (report, January 13). They seem to have no understanding of the life of expatriates in that country.

Saudi customs mean that most women are unable to work there and as a result their lives are inescapably defined by the status and role of their husbands.

While this may be anathema to the new breed of Nineties women leading highly satisfying independent lives in the UK, they should not impose their aspirations and prejudices on those choosing to live in a different manner in another culture or assume that they are defending those, like myself, who temporarily gave up professional careers to live voluntarily as a "company wife".

Yours truly,
HELENA PEACOCK
(Jedda, 1979-83),
28 Lancaster Grove, NW3 4PB.
January 13.

Christmas lockout

From Mr Antony Barlow

Sir, With visitors to stay over Christmas I was keen to show them the main exhibitions on at our capital's art galleries and museums and set out so intentioned on the morning of Christmas Eve. Some hope!

At one after another doors were firmly closed — no National or National Portrait Gallery, no Tate or Courtauld; no V&A, no British Museum. Alone amongst our London treasure houses, the Royal Academy of Arts was open.

London is full of tourists and inquisitive visitors at this time of year, not all of them intent on shopping or partying.

Yours sincerely,
ANTONY BARLOW,
3 Choumert Square, SE15 4RE.

Many happy returns?

From Mr J. R. Catlin

Sir, I see no sign of the Scottish and Welsh exiles returning to the tribal lands they have been caterwauling about for so many years.

Can I look forward to a set date when I shall see these unhappy exiles escaping to their "homelands" from slavery in England?

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT CATLIN,
Bleng Garth, Wellington,
Seascale, Cumbria CA20 1BH.
January 6.

**Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk***

Screening software

From Mr John Higgins

Sir, I hope that the new software to save schoolchildren from Internet porn (report, January 13) works more intelligently than current products.

I maintain a site with resources for teachers of English pronunciation, including complete lists of English homophones (pairs of words which sound the same, such as fair and fare) and homographs (pairs of words which look the same and sound different, such as to wind and the wind).

Several people have told me that they are blocked from my site by screening software, which clearly treats the prefix "homo-" as something hazardous to young minds.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN HIGGINS
(Lecturer), Centre for
English Language Teaching,
University of Stirling, FK9 4LA.
jjh1@stir.ac.uk
January 14.



COURT CIRCULAR

ST JAMES'S PALACE

January 14: The Prince of Wales, Colonel in Chief, Royal Dragoon Guards, this morning received Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cary upon relinquishing the appointment of Commanding Officer of the Royal Dragoon Guards, and Lieutenant Colonel Nick Millen upon assuming command.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

January 14: The Princess Royal presented Worldaware's Tenth Anniversary Business Awards at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, Westminster, London.

Her Royal Highness, President of the Patrons, Crime Concern, today attended a Neighbourhood Safety Partnership Luncheon at Claridge's Hotel, Brook Street, Westminster, London.

The Princess Royal, Patron, British Quality Foundation, this evening attended a Founder Members Reception at St James's Palace.

KENSINGTON PALACE

January 14: The Duke of Gloucester today was represented by Major Nicholas Barne at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of the Rt Hon the Lord Sainsbury which was held in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, London.

Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales will visit Montpelier Junior School, Beaconfield Road, Beacon Park, Plymouth, at 10.10; and as Visitor, St Luke's Hospice Plymouth, will visit the hospice at Stamford Road, Turnchapel, at 11.20.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State, Department of Education and Employment, was the guest of honour and spoke on 'Lifelong Learning' at a luncheon of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors held on Wednesday at the Institution. Mr Richard Lay, President, and Mr Jonathan Harris, OBE, Vice President, were the hosts.

University news

Leicester University

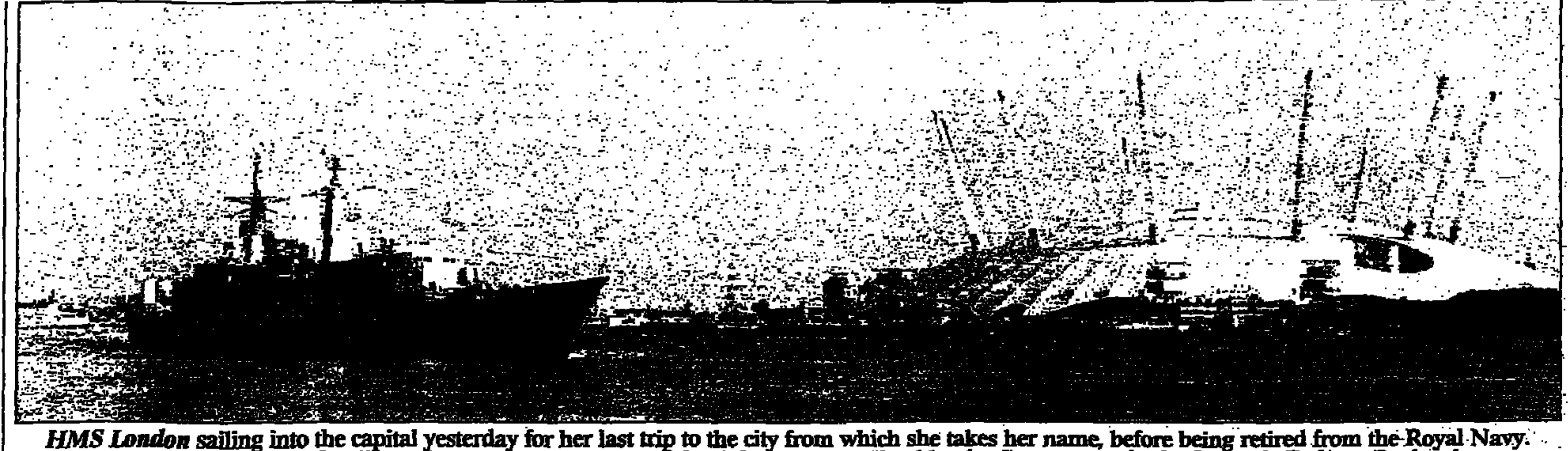
Professor S. Thompson has been appointed to a Chair of Economics at Leicester University.

Professor P. Vostanis has been appointed to the Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Dr K.J.R Edwards, vice-chancellor, has been elected President of the Association of European Universities.

Professor G. Davies (Psychology Department) has been appointed Chair of the Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition (SARMAC) and will preside at the society's annual meeting in Colarado in July.

Dr I. Harris (Politics Department) has been elected a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford.



TRICIA JOHNSON

HMS London sailing into the capital yesterday for her last trip to the city from which she takes her name, before being retired from the Royal Navy. The 12-year-old ship will go for disposal next summer as part of the defence cuts outlined by the Government in the Strategic Defence Review last year

Memorial service

Lord Sainsbury

The Duke of Gloucester was represented by Major Nicholas Barne at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Lord Sainsbury held yesterday at St Margaret's, Westminster Abbey. The Rev Robert Wright officiated and led the prayers. Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, KG and the Hon Sir Timothy Sainsbury, sons, read the lessons. Lord Roll of Ipsden gave an address. Among others present were:

The Hon Simon Sainsbury (son), the Hon Mrs Paulette Anderson (daughter), Lady Sainsbury of Preston Candover and the Hon Lady Sainsbury (daughters-in-law), Mr and the Hon Mrs Robert Butler-Sloss, the Hon Julian Sainsbury, the Hon Mark Sainsbury, Mr and Mrs James Sainsbury, Mr and Mrs Shaun Woodward, Mr Alexander Sainsbury, Mr and Mrs Peter Frankopan and Miss Lindsey Anderson (grandchildren).

Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury (brother and sister-in-law), Lord and Lady Sainsbury of Turville, the Hon Lucy Sainsbury, Mr and Mrs Peter Adams (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Mr Tony Van Den Bergh, Ms Peta Van Den Bergh, Mrs P Kanabus, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, MP, and Mrs Heathcoat-Amory, Mr and Mrs Barry Sainsbury, Mr Tom Woodward, Miss Ella Woodward, Miss Olivia Woodward.

The High Commissioner for Zambia, the Earl of Gowrie, the Earl of Listowel, Lord Aldington, Lord Ashburton, KG, and Lady Ashburton, Lord Boston of Faversham, QC, Lord Carter, Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos, CH, Baroness David, Lord Diamond, Lady Eccles of Moulton, Lord Gallacher, Baroness Hooper, Lord Laing of Dunphail.

Baroness Macleod of Borve, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, FBA, Lord Murray of Epping Forest, Lord Nathan, Lord Owen, CH, Lord Prior, Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank, Lord St John of Fawsley, Baroness Serota, Lord Steel of Aikwood, Lord Taylor of Gryfe, Lord Trefgarne, Lord Weatherill, Lord Wigoder, QC, and Lady Wigoder, Lady Morris of Kenwood (Paisner and Co).

Lord Lewis of Newnham, FRS (Warden, Robinson College, Cambridge), Lord Wolfson, FBA (chairman, Wolfson Foundation), the Hon Lady De Zulueta, Sir George Bull (chairman, J Sainsbury) with Mr Dino Adriano (chief executive) and other senior members of staff; Sir Michael and Lady Neubert, Sir David and Lady Scholey, Sir Guenter Treitel, FBA, QC.

Mr and Mrs Denis Doble, Mrs Mark Evans, Mr and Mrs R Feld, Mr and Mrs D N Freund, Mrs Rosemary Gaskell-Taylor, Mr and Mrs Graham Greene, Mr Garth Hoyer Millar, Dr J Martin, Mr and Mrs Tim Rathbone, Mrs Lois Sieff, Mr Kenneth Snowman, Professor J D R Thomas, Mr Michael Wilson, Rear Admiral J H Adams, Mr Richard Allen, Mr Ellis Birk, Mr Hans W Danziger.

Mr Anthony Alexander (Denton Hall), Mr Tom Blumenau (Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund), Mrs Sheila Boreham and Mrs T Bogue (Parkinson's Disease Society, Sudbury), Miss J Bradley (Rathbone), Mr Robin Briars (Cassel Hospital Development Trust), Mr Oliver Cox and Mrs J Gore-Booth (Trinity Hospice), Ms Lynda Craven (Shaare Zedek Medical Centre).

Mr Gerald S Davidson (headteacher, Vernon House School), Ms Joanne Denney (chief executive, Institute of Grocery Distribution), Mrs Sheila Diamond (honorary secretary, Youth Aliyah Child Rescue), Mrs Sylvia Edkins (secretary, Stonham Memorial Trust), Mr Christopher A Eyes (chief executive, Willen Hospice).

Mr Ernst Fraenkel (chairman, Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library), Dr Mayer Hillman (Policy Studies Institute), Dr Gillian Klein (trustee, Anne Frank Educational Trust), Mr Mark Ladd (Horwath Clark Whitehill).

Mr Jacques Le Roux (CIES), Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy (Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation), Mr Malcolm Ozin (honorary chief executive, Jewish Blind and Disabled) and Mrs Ozin, Mr John Mendelsohn (Holocaust Educational Trust), Mr C W Shelford (chairman, Council of Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust) with Mr J Rendel Jones (vice-chairman) and other past and present members of staff.

Sister Margaret Shepherd (director, the Council of Christians and Jews), Ms Carol Sherriff (director, Child Accident Prevention Trust), Mrs Audrey Shields (British Heart Foundation), Mrs S Stubbs (Runnymede Trust), Mr Jonathan Swift (managing director, British Hardware Federation).

Mr D J Walker and Mr T Norkett (Horwath Clark Whitehill), Mr S A Westley (Master of Haileybury), Mr N W Whiton (Uganda Asian Relief Trust), Ms Hazel Wigmore (director, National Children's Centre), Professor Ian Hall (Bloomsbury International Society), representatives of Woodman & Blount, the International Voluntary Service, the Canon Collins Educational Trust for Southern Africa, the Anglo-Israel Association, Denton Hall, the Matthew Trust and the Royal Court Theatre, with many other friends and former colleagues.

Birthdays today

Princess Michael of Kent celebrates her 54th birthday today.

Mr Robert Armstrong, racehorse trainer, 55; Mr Nick Ashley, designer, 42; Mrs Diana Barnato Walker, aviatrix, 81; Mrs Margaret Beckett, President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, 56; Mr Chuck Berry, singer, 73; Mr Frank Bough, broadcaster, 67; Sir Neil Cossons, director, Science Museum, 60; Lord Dacre of Glanton, 85; Miss Jane Drabble, director of education, BBC, 52; Mr Anthony Forbes, former joint senior partner, Cazenove and Company, 61; Mr Gareth Hale, comedian, 46; the Hon Mrs Justice Hogg, QC, 52; Professor David George Kendall, FRS, mathematical statistician, 81; Mr Nicholas Knightly, fashion designer, 42; Professor Peter Maitlis, FRS, inorganic chemist, 66; Lord Simon of Glaisdale, 88; Professor Sir John Smith, QC, FBA, Emeritus Professor of Law, Nottingham University, 77; Mr John Terraine, author, 78.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Molière, playwright, Paris, 1622; Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de St-Simon, diarist, Paris, 1675; William Prout, chemist, Horton, Gloucestershire, 1785; Franz Grillparzer, dramatist, Vienna, 1791; Thomas Crofton Croker, Irish folklorist, Cork, 1798; Pierre Proudhon, socialist, Besançon, France, 1809; Mihail Eminescu, poet, Ipotesti, Romania, 1850; Lewis Terman, pioneer of IQ tests, Johnson County, Indiana, 1877; Mazo De La Roche, novelist, Ontario, 1885; Ivor Novello, composer and dramatist, Cardiff, 1893; Aristotle Onassis, shipping magnate, Smyrna, Turkey, 1906; Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egyptian President 1956-70, Alexandria, 1918; Martin Luther King, civil rights leader, Nobel Peace laureate 1964, Atlanta, Georgia, 1929.

DEATHS: Paolo Sarpi, Venetian patriot and church reformer, Venice, 1623; Emma Lady Hamilton, former mistress of Lord Nelson, Calais, 1815; Fanny Kemble, actress, London, 1893; Matthew Brady, American Civil War photographer, New York, 1896; Sean MacBride, Irish statesman, Nobel Peace laureate 1974, Dublin, 1988.

Queen Elizabeth I was formally crowned Queen of England, 1559.

The British Museum opened at Montague House, London, 1759.

Forty people died when the ice broke on Regent's Park lake, London, after a severe frost, 1867.

Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, communist leaders, were murdered after the Spartacist uprising, Berlin, 1919.

The Royal Society of Chemistry

The following were admitted as Fellows of The Royal Society of Chemistry in December 1998. They are entitled to use the designation 'Chartered Chemist' and the letters CChem FRSC:

R H Bradley, S T A K Daley, R M Di Salvo, B L Feringa, L R F J Fernandes, P Fletcher, G R Geen, R C Glen, N J Gudde, J-P Hansen, M T Hopwood, D G Kennedy, G Kowalczyk, A J W Markwick, G A Mills, J A Murphy, M C Pritchard, C A Reynolds, L Smallshaw.

The Downs School, Colwall

Mr Christopher Black, previously headmaster of Clifton, South Africa, has been appointed headmaster of The Downs School as from April 1999, following the retirement of Mrs J. Griggs.

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

An Extraordinary Meeting of Convocation will be held in the University on Tuesday, January 26, 1999. The next Ordinary Meeting will take place on Saturday, June 5, 1999. For further information on either meeting, please contact the Alumni Office at the University.

Latest wills

Daphne Lady Hacking, of London SW1, left estate valued at £1,495,837 net.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr P.A.E. Adams and Miss B.J. Young

The engagement is announced between Peter, only son of Mr and Mrs W.M. Adams, of Jevington, Sussex, and Briony, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs J.R.A. Young, of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Mr D.B. Ashley-Timms and Miss L.R. Goldsmith

The engagement is announced between Dominic, son of Mr Alan Garnett, of Balsall Common, Warwickshire, and Mrs Lynne Ashley-Timms, of Marbella, Spain, and Laura, youngest daughter of Dr and Mrs Ralph Goldsmith, of Harrow, Middlesex.

Mr R.A. Band and Miss S.C. Bloor

The engagement is announced between Rupert, younger son of Mr and Mrs George Band, of Hartley Wintney, Hampshire, and Susannah, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Bloor, of St Minver, Cornwall.

Mr R.P. Bayne and Miss L.J. Whinney

The engagement is announced between Dick, youngest son of Sir Nicholas and Lady Bayne, of Hampton Court, and Laura, daughter of Mr Christopher Whinney, of Oxford, and Mrs Michael Bond, of Corfe Castle, Dorset.

Second Lieutenant S.E. Botham and Miss L.O.L. Brind

The engagement is announced between Simon, younger son of the late Mr R. Botham and Mrs T. Knight, and stepson of Mr T. Knight, and Lucinda, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs J.H. Brind, of Abbotsfield, Oxfordshire.

Flight Lieutenant M.W. Brooks and Miss L.P. Chenery

The engagement is announced between Marcus, elder son of Lieutenant Commander D.G. Brooks, RN, retd, and Mrs Brooks, of Woodbury, near Exeter, and Louise, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs R.J. Chenery, of Wroxton-St-Mary, Oxon.

Mr I. Broome and Miss J.E. Berry

The engagement is announced between Ian, son of the late Mr Kenneth Broome and of Mrs Hilda Broome, of Marsden, Huddersfield, and Janet Elaine, daughter of Mr Raymond Berry and of Mrs Marjorie Berry, of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

Mr P.J. D'Arcy and Miss B.C. Nelson

The engagement is announced between Patrick, elder son of Mr and Mrs Edward D'Arcy, of Ballinglen, Arklow, Co Wicklow, and Bridget, daughter of Mr and Mrs Henry Nelson, of Colne, Lancashire.

Mr C.A. Fouracre and Miss S.M.J. Roskill

The engagement is announced between Christopher, elder son of the late Mr Ronald Fouracre and of Mrs Alan O'Shea, of Blackheath, London, and Sybil, daughter of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Roskill, of Camberwell, London.

Mr S.M. Herbert and Miss K.V.L.M. Lee

The engagement is announced between Stephen, son of Mr and Mrs Patrick Herbert, of Port Elizabeth, and Kate, daughter of the Revd Hugh and Mrs Anne Lee, of Oxford.

Mr N.R. High and Miss H.R.H. Hughes

The engagement is announced between Nathaniel, younger son of Mr and Mrs Paul High, of Newbury, Berkshire, and Henrietta, daughter of Mr and Mrs Adrian Hughes, of Gaborone, Botswana.

Mr S.P. Holland and Miss J.M. Kent

The engagement is announced between Peter, eldest son of Professor Walter Holland and Mrs Fiona Holland, of Richmond, Surrey, and Judith, younger daughter of Mr Eric Kent and the late Mrs Dorothy Kent, of Putney, London.

Mr A.J. Lavelle and Miss M.L.B. Hempenstall

The engagement is announced between Alexander, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Richard Lavelle, of Windsor Forest, Berkshire, and Meaghan, second daughter of Mr and Mrs Brendan Hempenstall, of Kilmore, Australia.

Mr P.J. Marsden and Miss C.A. Hobson

The engagement is announced between Philip, younger son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Marsden-Smedley, of Burrington, Somerset, and Charlotte, younger daughter of Mr Anthony Hobson and the late Mrs Hobson, of Whitsbury, Hampshire.

Mr J.W. Raw and Miss K.A. Harper

The engagement is announced between Julian, son of Mr John Raw, of Hawkhurst, Kent, and Mrs Susan Blake, of Plaxtol, Kent, and Katharine, daughter of Mr and Mrs Henry J. Harper, of Selly Park, Birmingham.

Mr J.S. Rider and Miss R.E. Criddle

The engagement is announced between Jonathan, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Rider, of Devizes, Wiltshire, and Rachael, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Criddle, of Vellow, Somerset.

Mr J.L. Shawyer and Miss D.M. Van Der Watt

The engagement is announced between Jamie, son of Mr and Mrs J. Shawyer, of Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire, and Diana, daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Van Der Watt, of Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Mr M.A. Walley and Miss N.J. Lowe

The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Anthony and Theresa Walley, of Chiswick, and Nicki, daughter of John and Felicity Lowe, of Weston, Hertfordshire.

The Hon Giles Wigoder and Miss O. Sandler

The engagement is announced between Giles, son of Lord and Lady Wigoder, of London, and Livy, daughter of Professor and Mrs Merton Sandler, of Twickenham.

Mr S.J. Yurisich and Miss K.A. Bremer

The engagement is announced between Steven, son of Mr and Mrs Ivan Yurisich, of Melbourne, Australia, and Kimberly, daughter of Mrs Carole Bremer and the late Mr Keith Bremer, of Hockessin, Delaware, USA.

Westonbirt School

The Governors of Westonbirt School have appointed Mrs Mary Henderson, MA, as Headmistress from September 1999. Mrs Henderson is currently Head of Modern Languages at Westonbirt and was previously Sixth Form Housemistress at The Cheltenham Ladies' College.

Memorial service

Mr Marius Goring

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Mr Marius Goring, actor, was held yesterday at St Paul's, Covent Garden. The Rev David Vincent and Canon Bill Hall, senior chaplain, Actors' Church Union, officiated. Mr Edward Fox read the lesson. Mr Jimmy Logan gave a reading. Mr Anthony Butcher, QC, and Miss Ann Morrish read from the works of William Shakespeare and Mr Dinsdale Landen read from the works of John Donne.

Mr Richard Bebb gave an address.

During the service Mr Toby Jessel, piano, played *Träumerei* from *Kinderszenen* by Schumann, and Mr Colin Campbell sang *The Trumpet shall sound* from *Messiah* by Handel accompanied by Mr Steven Keogh, trumpet. Among others present were:

Mrs Goring (widow), Mr and Mrs Malcolm Meerendonk (son-in-law and daughter), Mr and Mrs Patrick Maher, Mr and Mrs Nigel Falconer, Mrs Katherine Kerr-Dineen, Air Commodore and Mrs P V Mayall, Colonel Simon Mayall, Mr and Mrs Bryan Ellis.

Margaret Countess Attlee, Lord Shawcross, QC, and Lady Shawcross, Sir Donald and Lady Sinden, Sir Nicholas and Lady Bayne, Miss Rachel Gurney, Miss Miriam Karlin, Mr Maurice Lambert, Mr and Mrs Milton Johns, Miss Leah Johns, Miss Carolyn Johns, Mr S Johns, Mr Michael Cashman.

Mr and Mrs Sebastian Breaks, Miss Isla Glaister, Mr and Mrs Gerry Glaister, Miss Morag Glaister, Mr Tony Britton, Miss Delia Lindsay, Mr Brendan Davis, Mr Peter Plouviez, Mr and Mrs Peter Bennett, Mr Frank Brennan, Mr Peter Theobald, Mr William Fox, Mr Michael Harding, Mr John Bullock, Mr Raymond Plowman, Miss Ann Heffernan.

Miss Eleanor McCreadie, Mr Herbert Lom, Ms Margaret Wolfit, Mr Ken Sephton, Mr Simon Raison, Mr Donald Gee, Mr and Mrs Richard Tyrell, Mr and Mrs Michael Ivens, Mrs Louise Smale, Mr Peter Honri, Mr Tom Cassidy, Mr W Spurgeon, Mr Hugh Manning, Mr Frederick Treves, Mr Derek Bond, Miss Helen Lambert, Mr Derek Gibney, Dr John Treasure, Mr Anthony Bate.

Miss Dionne Hart, Mr and Mrs Bruce Andrews, Father Jean-Marie Charles-Roux, Mr Stuart Burge, Mrs Toby Jessel, Miss Ursula Howells, Ms Ruth Caleb, Mr Martin Landy, Mr John Tyderman, Mr Michael Tyrell, Mr John Barron, Mr and Mrs Eugene Leviné.

Mr Frederick Pyne (president, British Actors' Equity Association) with Mr Ian McGarry (general secretary); Mr Eric Shorter (director, Royal Theatrical Fund) with Mr Henry McGee and Mr Paul Game; Mr Graeme Cruikshank (Save London's Theatres Campaign), Major Arthur Radley (Fighting 99th reunion) and Mrs Radley.

Mr James Penstone (vice-president, Vic-Wells Association), Mr Dominic Le Foe (director, Players' Theatre) and Mrs Le Foe, Mr James Gaddarn (conductor, London Orpheus Choir), Mrs Barbara Hyslop (Act for Equity), Mr Andrew Phillips (British Library), Mr Patrick Newley (*Stage and Television Today*), Mrs Lisa Parkes (Walton Theatre Collection).

Mr Nigel Richardson (Headmaster, Perse School, Cambridge), Mr Jim Simpson (*Movie Memories* Magazine), Miss Julia Abel Smith (Royal Society of Literature), Mr Martin Harvey (Garrick Club), Mr Jack Reading (Society of Theatre Research) and many other friends and former colleagues.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. 1 Peter 3.12 (NRSV).

BIRTHS

AMOR - On 11th January 1999 to Sara (née Bennison) and Neil, a daughter, Minnie Meda.

ANDERSON - On New Year's Day 1999, to Annabel (née King) and Ian, a son, Max Peter Christopher.

CHANNER - On Friday January 8th 1999, to Linda (née Summers) and Raphael, a son, Augustus Oswald Raphael, 'Gus'.

IRVING - On 8th January 1999 in Oxford to Claire (née Joy) and Christopher, a son Angus James Anthony.

KOHLER - On January 12th to Leoni (née Butwick) and David, a son, Max Alexander, a brother to Benjamin and Alyce.

MAHER - On January 7th 1999, at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to Sarah and Stephen, a son, Frederick George, a brother for Sophie and Archie.

MOURGUE - On January 11th at The Portland Hospital to Rochelle and Anthony, a beautiful daughter, Amorée Jasmine.

MYDDELTON - On January 11th, to Emma (née Brooks) and Guy, a son, Edward Arthur George.

RICHARDS - On January 8th at The Portland Hospital to Nneka Mokwe and Emile Richards, a daughter, Lauren Renée, a granddaughter for Beverly Mokwe.

SMITH-MYATT - On 14th January 1999 to Sarah and Matthew, twin sons, Thomas and Oliver, brothers for Naomi and Katie, reinforcements for James.

DEATHS

ANTHONY - Thomas Vaughan, 9th January 1999, peacefully in Cumbria, aged 90 years. Service of cremation at Springwood Crematorium, Springwood Avenue, Liverpool on Friday January 22nd, 12 noon. Family flowers only please, donations, if desired, to Arthritis Research, c/o Charles Stephens, Clifton House Funeral Home, 215 Bebington Road, Rock Ferry, Wirral L42 4QA.

ASKWITH - Patricia, peacefully at Hunters Care Home Cirencester, aged 79. Dear wife of Tom Askwith, and mother of Jocelyn, Michael and Marcus. Funeral at 12.30 pm Tuesday 19th January at Cheltenham Crematorium. No mourning. Refreshments afterwards at Friends Meeting House, Thomas Street, Cirencester. No flowers, but donations to Alzheimers Society may be sent c/o Packer & Slade, City Bank Road, Cirencester.

BAILEY - John Harold, peacefully at home after a short illness on 12th January 1999. Adored husband of Ann and much loved father of Christopher and Jeremy. Service of Thanksgiving at St. John's RC Church, South Parade, Bath at 12.30pm on Thursday 21st January. No flowers by request, but donations if desired for Macmillan Cancer Relief c/o Jollys of Bath, Funeral Directors, 7 Windsor Place, Upper Bristol Road, Weston, Bath.

BALDING - Maureen Dorothea Evelyn passed away suddenly in Jersey on Sunday 10th January, aged 84 years. Devoted sister of the late Sheena and dearly loved by Sally and Pauline. Funeral Service at St James' Church, Southam, Warwickshire on Tuesday 19th January at 2.00pm followed by interment at Bascote Heath Cemetery. Flowers and enquiries to W Goodwin & Sons, 38 Coventry Street, Southam, CV33 0EP. 01926 812445.

BEVAN - Leslie George, of Colletts Green, Worcester, peacefully at home on January 11th. The Funeral Service will take place at Powick Parish Church on Tuesday January 19th at 12 noon. Family flowers only please, donations for Riding for the Disabled or The Injured Jockey's Fund may be sent to Malcolm J Presland Funeral Directors, 19 High Street, Upton upon Severn.

BOWLBY - Dame Dora died peacefully after a short illness on 13th January, aged 92 at the Sue Ryder Home at Leckhampton. Cremation will take place at a private service at Gloucester Crematorium at 11.30am, 22nd January.

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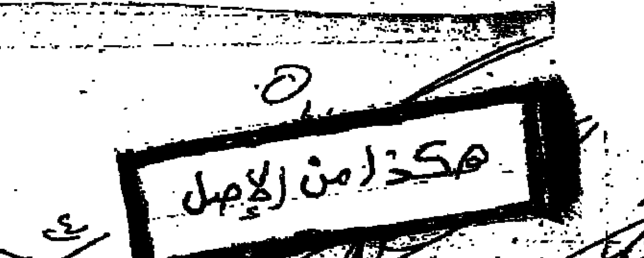
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OBITUARIES

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR PETER FLETCHER

Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Fletcher, KCB, OBE, DFC, AFC, Air Systems Controller, Defence Procurement Executive, Ministry of Defence, 1971-73, died on January 2 aged 82. He was born on October 7, 1916.

Peter Fletcher is best remembered by his peers as the man who fought many of the RAF's battles over funding during the turbulent 1960s in Whitehall. The Royal Navy, which might recall him with less affection, was struggling to replace its aircraft carriers, as the Labour Government's Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, prepared to prune the costs of the Armed Forces.

The RAF's case was that it could do the same job more efficiently through its string of air bases in the Middle and Far East. The long-term result might now be seen as a low-score draw. The Navy had to make do with its Invincible class of mini-carriers — the so-called "through-deck cruisers" — while most of the RAF bases East of Suez were to disappear in the next decade.

But the debate enlarged Fletcher's reputation as a "Whitehall warrior". As Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Policy and Plans) between 1964 and 1966, then as Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, 1967-70, he was seen by the Air Board as the most articulate advocate in the Service.

Not that the role was entirely to Fletcher's liking. He was also a more than capable fighter pilot who had won his DFC on Easter Day in 1942 when the Japanese, fresh from their conquest of Singapore, launched an airborne assault on British bases in Ceylon. In the process Fletcher, commanding a Hurricane squadron in Colombo, was shot down and wounded by shrapnel — badly enough for him to be taken to hospital and temporarily grounded.

A decade later he won the AFC, while testing an all-weather system for combat aircraft while instructing at the training school at RAF Feltwell.

But he was also a trained lawyer, whose clear brain and sharp eye for detail had made the RAF appreciate his value behind a desk. It was thus that his path to the top — somewhat to his frustration — was to lie through a succession of important staff jobs.



Fletcher, as Vice-Chief of Air Staff, visiting the RAF in Malta in the 1960s

He was born Peter Carteret Fletcher outside Salisbury in what was then Southern Rhodesia, where his father, originally from Oxford, owned a large tobacco farm. (The farm, long sold by the family, is one of those now threatened by sequestration by President Mugabe.)

Peter, whose father was a Roman Catholic, went to St George's College, the Jesuit school in Salisbury, and thence to read law at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. It was the war which changed the course of his career. Having learnt to fly in his spare time, he was snapped up by the Southern Rhodesian Air Force — then absorbed by the RAF after Britain opened a number of training bases in the country.

His OBE reflected his work early in the war on a film promoting Southern Rhodesia's war effort. The novelist Dornford Yates was also involved with it.

After being shot down in Ceylon, he was sent back to Rhodesia, to command a training establishment on Salisbury racecourse. From there he was dispatched on a course at the Haifa staff college in Palestine — where he made such a good impression that they kept him on with a post on the directing staff.

This set the pattern for the rest of his career. From Haifa he was assigned to the directing staff of the newly-formed Joint Services Staff College at Latimer, Bucks, and ten years later was on the directing staff of the Imperial Defence College in Belgrave Square.

He commanded RAF Abingdon in the late 1950s and had two tours on the Joint Planning Staff in the Cabinet Office, one of them as its deputy director. He was a Director Operational Requirements at the Air Ministry, 1961-63.

Later, as an Air Vice-Marshal, he led 38 Group, based at Odiham, in Transport Command — but only for 18 months before he was urgently recalled to the ministry to take over as Vice-Chief of Air Staff with the rank of Air Marshal. He was once on his way out of the Ministry of Defence to start embarkation leave before being sent to Cyprus when the Chief of the Air Staff urgently called him back and asked if he would mind staying a little longer. Whitehall, it seemed, could never manage long without him.

He felt more frustrated than ever when, after serving as Vice-Chief of Air Staff, he was posted out of the ministry altogether, as Controller of Aircraft at the Ministry of Aviation and Supply. Further reorganisation, however, meant that in 1971 he was brought back to the ministry for his last posting, as Air Systems Controller in the new Procurement Executive.

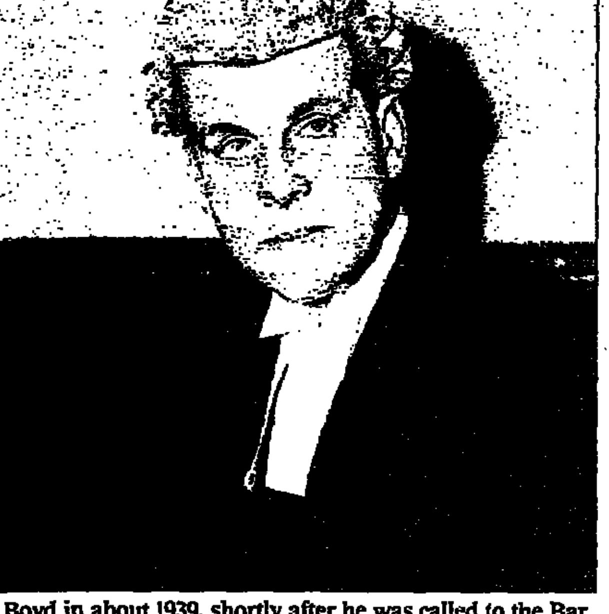
A year after his retirement in 1973 Fletcher was made a director of Hawker-Siddeley. Following the company's merger with BAC, he was made Director of Corporate Strategy and Planning with British Aerospace in 1977 and joined the Airbus Industry Supervisory Board. (His French counterpart in Toulouse — to which he frequently commuted — called him "Mr Airbus"). He retired from these posts, too, in 1982, while remaining an aerospace consultant.

A great reader and a hospitable man with many friends outside the RAF, Fletcher remained an inveterate traveller, enjoying holidays in distant lands.

He married his wife Isobel, the daughter of a distinguished legal family in South Africa, in 1940 after first meeting her at Rhodes University. Peter Fletcher is survived by her and by two daughters.

LESLIE BOYD

Leslie Boyd, CBE, Clerk of the Court and Clerk of the Peace for the City of London, 1955-77, died on December 18 aged 84. He was born on November 25, 1914.



Boyd in about 1939, shortly after he was called to the Bar

WHEN he retired in 1977 Leslie Boyd had behind him a career of some 36 years at the Central Criminal Court. His task as Clerk was to ensure the smooth running of the court. Although he was little known to the public, he was a familiar figure to judges, barristers, solicitors and all others who had regular business at the Old Bailey. His loyal staff referred to him as "The Headmaster". One of them wrote the television series *Boyd QC* and named it after him.

He led from the front and disliked being hidden in an office at the back of the building. Taking large, easy strides, fully robed in his black silk gown and bewigged, always in a casual hurry, his tall upright form could be seen floating from one courtroom to another throughout the day.

He was the person who chose the judge to try a particular case, and he was the one who arraigned many a notorious fraudster, spy, rapist, arsonist, poisoner or murderer. It was his voice which (until this "allocutus" was abolished in the late 1960s) was heard by the most infamous of criminals before they were sentenced: "Prisoner at the Bar, do you have anything to say why judgment should not be passed upon you according to law?"

Leslie Balfour Boyd was educated at Evely's Preparatory School and at 14 was sent to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, where he suffered an injury to his hip and had to be invalided out of the Navy. He matriculated from a crammer at Swanage and spent an unsuccessful year reading for a BSc at King's College London, after which he was apprenticed for a short period at Clement Talbot's, the motor manufacturers.

After marrying he decided on a career in the law. During November 1939 he was called to the Bar and not long after that he was called up for naval service, only to be invalided out a second time in 1940. He returned to the Bar and became a pupil of Robert Fortune ("Frothy Bob"). Soon after, he joined the staff of the Central Criminal Court as Clerk of Arraigns. Thirteen years later he was appointed Clerk of the Court.

As time went by he accumulated his vast and extensive knowledge of the criminal law and became an outstanding expert on the drafting of indictments. He was largely responsible for the resurrection of the ancient offence of Common Law Affray. He edited the title *Juries* in the standard work *Halsbury's Laws of England* and contributed to the title *Criminal Law* in the same work.

Practitioners and judges at the Old Bailey often sought his advice on practice and procedure as well as the criminal law. He had a strong sense of decorum, coupled with natural good judgment, and good-humoured charm which could take the heat out of a difficult situation. On one occasion he came across a Silk, his junior and instructing solicitor outside one of the courtrooms having an indignant argument with a police officer determined to arrest their defence witness, whom he recognised as a borstal escapee. Boyd decided that if the man was properly summoned as a witness then he could not be arrested within the precincts of the court. All accepted the decision and the witness was given a 50-yards start.

From 1955 to 1977 every notorious criminal was arraigned by Boyd. Asked about the trial of Ruth Ellis he recalled that during her cross-examination she was asked "When you shot your lover did you intend to kill him?" Her answer was a simple and straightforward "Yes". Boyd's verdict was: "She was beautiful but she was wicked — she was the most deliberate cold-blooded murderess I have come across." He added: "She was very properly hanged."

Boyd did not agree with the abolition of the death penalty. "With that, all the atmosphere and steam had been taken out of murder trials." With the passage of time, however, he became certain that it should not be reintroduced — "We can't go back to that."

During his time at the Old Bailey the building was twice subjected to attack: in 1941 a 1,000lb bomb dropped by the Luftwaffe caused extensive damage, and in 1973 the IRA planted a bomb in a car left in the street.

In addition to being the Clerk, he was also appointed Clerk of the Peace for the City of London, which brought with it more responsibilities for the running of the building and the courts it contained. After 1964 the number of courts under his administration gradually increased to a record high of 23. This growth placed a great burden on him. The enactment of the Courts Act in 1971 saw him preside over the change from administration by the City to that by the Civil Service of the Lord Chancellor's Department, a change with which he was not in sympathy.

The post of Clerk of the Peace was one of the ancient offices of the City of London, and that meant a great deal to him. His love of the City showed itself in many ways, but particularly in his membership of the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers Company, of which he was elected Master in 1969. He was devoted to the Company and was passionate about its efforts to keep the craft alive and about its charitable works. After retirement he was appointed CBE.

He married Wendy (née Blake) in 1936. In 1953 they sold their house in Bayswater in favour of a 60ft barge moored at Twickenham. Many a summer holiday was spent with family and friends sailing the barge often across to France. It was only after a near-disaster at sea (off Dover) that the boat was sold and Boyd moved with his wife and children to Stone Cross at Crowborough. From Sussex they moved to Islington and then to Highbury. France, where he had a house, remained a favourite holiday destination.

His wife predeceased him in 1997. He is survived by their son and daughter.

RON HUZZARD



Ron Huzzard, peace campaigner, died on December 30 aged 78. He was born on February 29, 1920.

RON HUZZARD had many of the finest qualities of the old-fashioned Labour movement. His passionate support for social justice, based on a belief in a broad equality between one citizen and another, was the conviction of a lifetime. He was never in any doubt that these aims could be achieved only through the Labour Party and the trade unions.

His outlook was shaped by his father, also a strong trade unionist, and by a teacher at his school who described to him the horrors of the First World War. As a result, Huzzard became a pacifist and later joined the Labour Party.

After the Second World War, in which he was a conscientious objector, Huzzard — an engineer — became active in the old Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians' Association (DATA) which subsequently merged into the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union. On moving to London, in the mid-1940s, he became chairman of his local DATA branch and served on the union's district council. He was given a TUC award for evening study at the London School of Economics, and was elected to the union's panel of parliamentary candidates.

With this backing he fought and lost the then strongly Tory Croydon North West constituency in 1955. He came closer to success in 1964 when he reduced the Tory majority in Chislehurst from 6,600 to 1,500 — a very creditable result against the formidable Dame Pat Hornsby-Smith.

He was destined never to get into Parliament but he and his wife Rosalie were stalwarts of the Orpington Labour Party. Huzzard himself was a Bromley Labour councillor for 18 years. He took a keen interest in education and was chairman of the governors at Kevington Primary School, in a socially deprived part of an otherwise prosperous borough.

His pacifist convictions had a strong moral basis in his commitment as a Quaker. When he left paid employment in 1985, he became national peace officer at the Society of Friends. He received the Frank Cousins Peace Award from the Transport and General Workers' Union and was invited by the Imperial War Museum to contribute to its wartime oral history project.

Perhaps his most enduring achievement came in his later years as secretary of Labour Action for Peace, a post he held from 1985 until a few months ago, when illness forced him to give up. He and his wife kept this small but influential organisation going within the Labour Party — organising fringe meetings at the party conference, editing pamphlets and when necessary writing letters of protest even to Labour ministers.

Although a pacifist, Huzzard was no utopian. He believed that peace and disarmament could be achieved only by patiently using the democratic process: at the United Nations, in the House of Commons and through the Labour Party. He held that excessive defence expenditure was a major cause of Britain's relative economic decline since the war. He wanted to see Britain's defence spending at no more than the average of the West European members of Nato. He found it hard to accept that Germany should be spending so much less on defence than the United Kingdom, and found the Strategic Defence Review a great disappointment. His last days were saddened by the Anglo-American air strikes on Iraq.

Ron Huzzard is survived by his wife, whom he married in 1952, and by their son and daughter.

MORRIS BENETT

Morris Benett, MC, journalist, died on January 6, aged 84. He was born on December 30, 1914.

WHEN the *Daily Express* was at its peak, making its star writers into household names, Morris Benett was unknown to its four and a quarter million readers. His byline never appeared, for in various roles, from sub-editor to managing editor, he was the type of journalist who manned the engine room in order to keep the *Express* steaming ahead.

He helped to bring out the *Daily Express* under the famous editorships of Arthur Christiansen, Ted Pickering and Bob Edwards — and quite a few of their numerous successors — but his colleagues were mostly unaware that behind a distinguished newspaper career there was an equally distinguished military record.

Morris Benett was born at the beginning of one war and became fulfilled in another. He came from a military family — his father was Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Benett — but after education at Wrekin College in Shropshire, he showed no interest in the Services. He joined the *Evening Sentinel* at Stoke-on-Trent and moved to Manchester to begin the long journey to Fleet Street.

When war broke out, however, he immediately volunteered as a private in the Royal West Kent Regiment and was later commissioned into the Northamptonshire Regiment. He took part in the First Army's invasion of North Africa with his regiment's 5th Battalion and gained his MC following the German breakthrough at the Kasserine Pass in 1943.

He was wounded in the head at the end of the North African campaign — a wound which prevented him being accepted for one of the Special Services units. Instead, he continued with his regiment, taking part in the conquest of Sicily and the subsequent invasion of Italy. Towards the end of the war, he became an editor with the British Army Newspaper Unit.

He had already obtained a foothold in Fleet Street before the war and he returned there when he was demobilised with the rank of major. There was much competition to join the *Daily Express* in those days, however, and he had to wait until 1950 to secure a post as a subeditor. It was not long, though, before he was promoted to chief sub-editor, and he frequently acted in another key post as night editor. He spent 21 years producing the paper night after night, until he moved into administration as managing editor.

In his retirement he became an enthusiastic bridge player, an active member of the Savage Club and pursued his interest in military history, music and the ballet.

His Argentine-born wife, Margarita, predeceased him. They had no children.

On This Day

January 15, 1840

This Scottish tale of heroic endeavour, simply told, was lifted from the Inverness Courier *a fortnight after publication, not uncommon in an age when news travelled slowly*

MELANCHOLY SHIPWRECK

On Friday the 3d instant, as Mr. Andrew Curle, manager on the Cromarty property, was passing through the woods which cover the hill immediately behind the town, with the view of ascertaining the ravages of the previous storm, he was led in his exploratory ramble to the steep broken line of precipices which overhangs the Moray Forth on the north.

There was a heavy sea tumbling over the beach below, and dashing high against the rocks, and the shattered fragments of some hapless vessel lay tossing in the surf. Mr Curle immediately descended to the shore by a steep and hazardous path, but reached it only to find that all help had come too late.

The broken remains of a large sloop lay, half submerged in the breakers, with the mast lying athwart towards the shore, which was strewed for more than a hundred yards on either side with shattered planks and tangled masses of rigging. The crew had all disappeared, and Mr. Curle, after exploring every recess among the precipices, was on the eve of returning when it occurred to him that a little cove, rendered almost inaccessible by a precipice projecting into the surf, might shelter some of the seamen. He passed the projecting rock, and found the sole survivor of the crew at the edge of the waves, in a state of great exhaustion, with one of the sails thrown partially over him by the surf and his feet entangled in a mingled wreath of seaweed and gravel.

The poor man, though speechless, feebly stretched out his hands to his deliverer who, carefully extricating him from his perilous situation, bore him round the projecting precipice, where he was joined by two women and a boy, whom his cries for assistance had brought from the wood where they had been engaged in gathering sticks.

The precipices of this part of the hill are fully a hundred yards in height, and the paths steep and perilous. There was no time to be lost, however, in the exhausted state of the poor seaman; and Mr. Curle, a robust and very powerful man, taking him in his arms, and directing the women to pass round his body the ropes which they had brought with them, and assist by pulling, succeeded after an hour, spent in almost incredible exertion, in bringing him to the top of the hill, to the cottage of a neighbouring shepherd.

The poor man gradually recovered, and told them how, about four the previous night, they had been wakened by a cry that the ship was among the breakers. The sea was tremendous, and soon the deck opened from stem to stern, and disappeared among the breakers. He had heard the boy with the crew calling for assistance, which he could not give. The fingers of the recued seaman were divested of the skin, almost to the nails, in his struggle with the rocks, and his feet were in a similar condition.

PERSONAL COLUMN

NEWS

Battle begins for Clinton survival
President Clinton was accused of "egregious and criminal" conduct at the start of the Senate trial to determine whether he will be thrown out of office, in the first presidential impeachment hearings for 131 years. Leading Republicans opened the prosecution by declaring that Mr Clinton had "put himself above the law" by committing perjury and attempting to obstruct justice after his affair with Monica Lewinsky............Page 1

Reprieve for foster parents on the run
Social workers backed down yesterday and offered the couple who have gone into hiding with their foster children the chance to keep them. In a personal appeal to Jeff and Jennifer Bramley, Liz Railton, director of Cambridge social services, said the courts should decide whether they can adopt Jade and Hannah Bennett............Page 1

Middle class pursuit
The Prime Minister declared that Labour needed to appeal to a new, expanding middle class in order to keep the party in power for the next ten years...Pages 1, 8

Smoking extends day
Diehard smokers among a council's staff have been told they must work an extra 2½ hours a week to make up for breaks. Thurrock Council in Essex says that every time a smoker leaves the building it places an unfair workload on a non-smoking colleague.....Page 1

Briton's jungle ordeal
A former soldier who travelled halfway around the world to escape his guilt at having killed two people in a road accident has survived *22 days lost in the jungles of* Papua New Guinea. Clive Sutton, 30, was abandoned by his guide on the first day of a trek...Page 5

Child jail criticised
Young offenders were physically restrained 150 times a month by staff at Britain's first child jail as staff used excessive force to maintain order, according to an damning official report............Page 6

Hostage home
John Brooke, the British oil worker kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen for four days, declared that "it was wonderful" to be back home after being reunited with his wife Katherine for the first time in five weeks............Page 9

Justice Bill attacked
The Lord Chancellor's reform of the justice system has been attacked for what are described as the "almost untrammelled" powers proposed for himself. Lord Irvine of Lairg's Access to Justice Bill has been severely criticised in a report from the Lords' select committee............Page 10

Royal art extension
The Queen has approved a major extension of the Buckingham Palace art gallery to quadruple the exhibition space for the Royal Collection, one of the largest assemblages of art in the world.......Page 11

IRA arms standoff
There is "no prospect whatsoever" of the IRA surrendering arms *to secure Sinn Fein's entry into* Northern Ireland's government, Martin McGuinness has told *The Times*............Page 12

Freetown in chaos
Enraged residents tore down wooden scaffolding to use as clubs on suspected rebel infiltrators in central Freetown, while Nigerian troops set up roadblocks and shot them......Page 17

EC fraud retreat
After a week of noisy threats, the European Parliament stepped back from the brink and spared the European Commission any immediate punishment for alleged fraud *and mismanagement* in its *midst*............Page 18

Pope debunks bearded God image
In the face of evidence from the Bible to Michelangelo, the Pope spoke out against "patriarchal" images of God, declaring that the deity is "not to be imagined as an old man with a flowing white beard". The pontiff did not suggest how God should be pictured, and stopped short of saying that the divine being was female............Page 3

CHRIS HARRIS



Monet's *Water Lily Pond*, never before shown to the public, is on loan from an anonymous private collector for the "Monet in the 20th Century" exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts. Staff yesterday prepared the painting for the show, from January 23 to April 18

***Profits warning:** A disastrous fall in* sales over Christmas forced Marks & Spencer, Britain's largest clothing retailer, to issue its first ever profits warning............Page 27

Market turmoil: World stock markets remained volatile yesterday in the wake of their fright over the prospect of an economic crisis in Brazil............Page 27

Sears bid: Frederick and David *Barclay have emerged as the sur*prise backers of Philip Green, the entrepreneur who tabled a £519 million bid for retailer Sears...Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 index fell 29.90 points to 5820.2. The pound rose 0.56 cents against the dollar to $1.6578 and 0.27p against the euro to 70.59p. The sterling index rose to 99.3 from 99.0............Page 30

Football: Paul Merson urged the Aston Villa manager John Gregory to show him consideration in his battle against addiction.....Page 52

Golf: Jack Nicklaus will have hip replacement surgery this month, forcing him to miss the Masters for the first time in 40 years.........Page 52

Tennis: Lawyers acting for Petr Korda lodged a High Court action in London challenging whether the *International Tennis Federation has* the right to appeal against the player escaping a one-year ban after testing positive for steroids. "The matter is completely in the hands of my lawyer," Korda said....Page 47

Cricket: The only problem that genuinely needs to be solved by England for World Cup team selection is who will bat at No 3.....Page 46

Richard Morrison: "No art form matters more than architecture . . . we have to live with it, and in it" — the search for a new RIBA president affects us all............Page 35

Drama on tour: The director Elijah Moshinsky describes how audience reactions in the regions shaped his RSC production of *Richard III*, arriving in the West End......Page 35

Musical fireworks: Handel's first London opera, *Rinaldo*, was an unashamed blockbuster with showstopping tunes. Cecilia Bartoli treats Birmingham to a terrific concert performance............Page 36

Pop on Friday: Caitlin Moran meets the legendary Ronnie Spector, on the up again. Plus the businessman with the future of pop in his hands............Page 37

Man of faith: Cardinal Hume's friends conclude their tributes to the leader of Britain's Roman Catholics............Page 19

Jane Shilling: "I have come to the conclusion that you can tell a good deal about a nation's attitude to sex by what it wears in bed"...Page 20

Class act: Clawing your way into the upper classes is the social obsession of our times, says Wendy Holden............Page 21

Joe Joseph: "Soon we will be able to enjoy success with our joke-telling as frequently as the Germans do — which is about 6 per cent of the time"............Page 21

Woman's fury: Should a scorned wife seek revenge? Fiona Duff has advice for the vengeful......Page 39

***Action man:** The second round of* bidding for education action zones starts today. David Blunkett explains what standards the Government hopes to achieve......Page 43

When Brazil's latest financial crisis broke on Wednesday, visions of the Mexican collapse of 1994 must have flashed through the minds of world leaders. Many signs of a crash were there. Now it's up to the Clinton Administration and the Group of Seven industrialized nations to step in immediately with political support for Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Los Angeles Times



TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

ON SATURDAY

■ **YOUNG BLOOD**
Football's brightest young stars

■ **RICK STEIN**
Why the British can't stand fish



Preview: Meet Britain's most successful female group, and they are not the Spice Girls. *Young Guns (Go for it)* (BBC2, 11.15pm) **Review:** Paul Hoggart on the business of losing weight............Pages 50, 51

All floating now
An electorate dominated by an expanding but more diverse middle class will offer its own new complexities. It will hold political positions that cut across traditional party lines............Page 23

Smoke over Freetown
If the rebel advance can be reversed in Sierra Leone, recovery is still possible. The older generation are well educated and there is a widespread respect for democracy.......Page 23

Royal bounty
If a new art gallery to display the Royal Collection can be completed *in time for the* Queen's Golden Jubilee, it will present itself as a celebratory gift of a Sovereign to her nation............Page 23

SIMON JENKINS
Yesterday circumstances offered the Commission the golden chance to flex its muscles and assert demo*cratic sovereignty over Brussels*. It funked it. Just as there appears no way of reforming the Commission, so there is no way of reforming the Parliament............Page 22

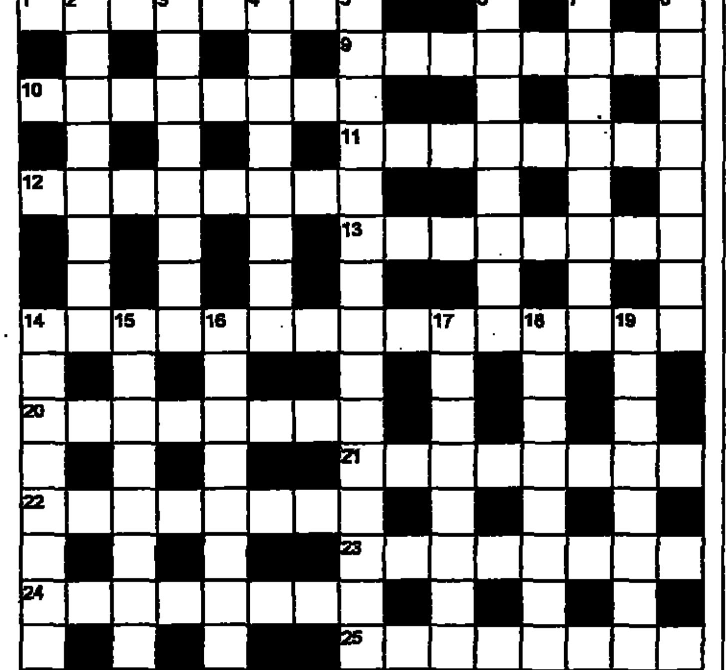
MARY ANN SIEGHART
If a computer could design the antithesis of Peter Mandelson, it would be Lord Falconer of Thoroton: Charlie to his friends, and pretty much anyone else who meets him............Page 22

PHILIP HOWARD
"Sir, Why do you persist in aping the tutter gabloids by in creasing the puns in your headlines? Disppunted, One Bridge Tells" Complaints about puns are the second most pungent complaint newspapers receive............Page 22

Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Fletcher; Leslie Boyd, lawyer; Ron Huzzard, pacifist; Morris Benett, journalist............Page 25

German citizenship laws; drugs research; ethnic humour on TV; gun control; traffic in Oxford...Page 23

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,001



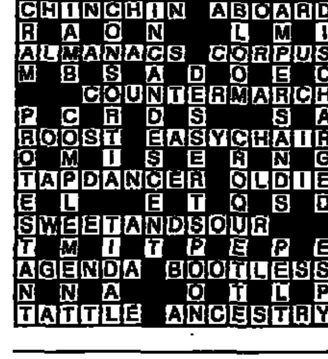
ACROSS

1 Its progress in China is dependant on manpower (8).
9 Look on as perfect fish is served in beer (8).
10 Old soldier's unwell, beset by pains (8).
11 Plant making hot biscuits poorly, short of time (8).
12 *Forge common name to cheque's* last lines (8).
13 One unaffected by any fare restrictions (8).
14 Composer, poet and playwright (7,8).
20 Beyond rule, riot is breaking out (8).
21 Heavenly light (8).
22 Flower of youth (8).
23 King organised test for knightly deeds (8).
24 Spartan hero's Athenian lover (8).
25 What holds viewer? Ultimate in game and chat shows certainly included (3-5).

DOWN

2 Where film is usually not shown (2,6).
3 *Linked up cables for Jersey*, off the Needles? (8).
4 Old country — hard to leave it when moving (8).
5 Common expression backing received views? (4,3,4,4).
6 Close friend finally changing sides in the household (8).
7 Firm hold on a tree (8).
8 Fools entering half of shares to alter tax liability (8).
14 See to the French room for concert in South Bank section (8).
15 One's possibly found among extreme characters in unsocial terror act (8).
16 Maiden heroine upset Shakespeare's queen (8).
17 Unusually, a lighter form of lead monoxide (8).
18 Seed provided by key teachers in group (5-3).
19 A number turned up in painting as record of former times (8).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,000



CHINCHIN ABOARD
R A O N L M I
ALMANACS CORPUS
M B S A D O E C
COUNTERMARCH
P C R D S S A
ROOST EASYCHAIR
O M I S E R N G
TAPDANCER OLDIE
E L E T O S D
SWEETANDSOUR
T M I T P E P E
AGENDA BOOTLESS
N N A O T L P
TATTLE ANCESTRY

Times Two Crossword, page 52

TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED, 1999. Published and printed and licensed for distribution in electronic and all other derivative forms by Times Newspapers Ltd, PO Box 495, Virginia Street, London E1 9XN, telephone 0171-782 5000 and also printed at Kiling Road, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN, telephone 0151-546 2000, Friday, January 15, 1999. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

Sun rises: 7.59 am | Sun sets: 4.20 pm

Moon sets: 2.41 pm | Moon rises: 5.53 am

New moon: January 17th

London 4.20 pm to 7.58 am
Bristol 4.30 pm to 8.09 am
Edinburgh 4.10 pm to 8.33 am
Manchester 4.19 pm to 8.17 am
Penzance 4.48 pm to 8.15 am

☐ **General:** mild, heavy rain, very windy. Winds of gale force across N and W and along Channel. Tonight, mild, very windy; blustery showers in N, heavy rain in S.

☐ **London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands:** windy; heavy rain by afternoon. Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Cent S, SW England, Channel Is:** very windy; heavy rain by afternoon. Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **E Eng, W Midlands, Wales:** heavy rain, hill-fog. Feeling rather chilly in the strong to gale-force SW wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **NW Eng, IoM:** heavy rain, hill-fog. Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 12C (54F).

☐ **Lakes, Cent N, NE England:** very windy, heavy rain. Strong to gale-force SW wind. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland:** very wet, windy. Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **SW, NW Scotld, G'gow, Cent Highlands, Argyll:** very windy, heavy rain, hill-fog. Sharp showers later, some with hail. *Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 9C (48F).*

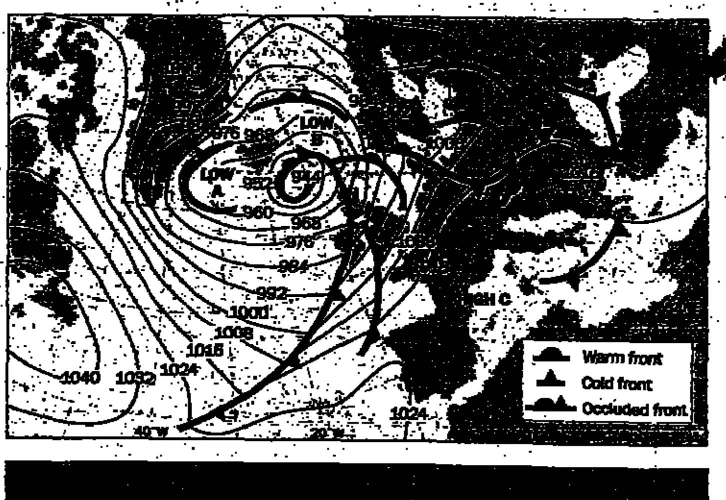
☐ **N Ireld:** heavy rain; sharp showers later. Strong/gale-force SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **Rep of Ireld:** wet; sleet on hills. Showers later; some sleet or snow. Strong/gale-force *W/SW wind. Colder later. Max 10C (50F)*

☐ **Outlook:** blustery tomorrow; sunny spells and showers; wintry over hills. On Sun, showery; persistent rain in Scotland.



Changes to chart from noon: low A drifts south and loses its identity. Low B drifts N or NE and slowly fills. High C moves east and builds



24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gales; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	1.9	0.15	4	39	b
Anglesey	0.4	0.06	9	48	r
Aspatria	0.2	0.18	7	45	r
Aviemore	0.3	0.43	2	36	sn
Belfast	0.9	0.11	7	45	sl
Birmingham	5.1	0.13	7	45	s
Bognor R	5.1	0.02	8	46	s
Bournemth	5.3	0.02	9	48	s
Bristol	5.0	0.01	9	48	s
Buxton	3.0	0.46	5	41	r
Cardiff	2.5	0.02	9	48	sh
Clacton	5.2	0.01	7	45	b
Cleethorpes	2.2	-	7	45	b
Colwyn Bay	1.3	0.05	9	48	r
Cromer	4.6	0.02	6	43	s
Eastbourne	7.2	0.03	9	48	s
Edinburgh	0.6	0.12	5	41	sh
Eskdalemuir	-	0.39	4	39	sn
Exmouth	3.5	0.01	9	48	s
Fishguard	1.3	0.02	9	48	r
Folkestone	5.1	0.05	8	46	s
Glasgow	0.2	0.30	6	43	sh
Guernsey	4.2	0.06	11	52	sh
Hastings	5.3	0.05	8	46	b
Hayling I.	4.4	0.02	9	48	b
Herne Bay	4.9	-	8	46	b
Hove	3.7	-	8	46	b
Hunstanton	4.7	-	6	43	s
Isle of Man	0.4	0.07	9	48	r
Isle of Wight	X	0.01	9	48	b
Jersey	3.2	0.15	10	50	sh
Kinloss	0.6	0.27	4	39	sl
Leeds	3.7	0.16	7	45	sl
Lerwick	1.0	0.92	4	39	h
Leuchars	1.3	0.17	4	39	sl
Littlehampton	4.5	0.01	9	48	s
London	5.9	-	9	48	s
Lowestoft	4.8	0.01	6	43	sh
Manchester	2.6	0.23	7	45	r
Margate	3.9	0.01	7	45	s
Morecambe	0.8	0.14	7	45	sh
Newcastle	2.7	0.01	7	45	r
Newquay	3.3	0.03	9	48	b
Norwich	5.9	0.03	7	45	s
Oxford	4.9	0.02	8	46	sh
Penzance	5.3	0.05	11	52	s
Poole	4.3	0.01	10	50	s
Prestatyn	1.2	0.05	8	46	sh
Ross on Wye	4.7	0.01	9	48	s
Saunton Sands	2.4	-	10	50	s
Shrewsbury	3.8	0.13	8	46	r
Skegness	4.7	0.02	7	45	s
Southport	X	0.04	8	46	sh
Stornoway	0.2	0.34	5	41	sn
Swanage	4.5	0.01	9	48	s
Teignmouth	3.8	0.01	10	50	b
Tenby	2.1	0.01	11	52	s
Tiree	0.5	0.31	6	43	h
Torquay	4.6	0.01	12	54	s
Tynemouth	-	0.01	7	45	s

Yesterday: highest day max: Torquay, 12C (54F); lowest day max: Aviemore, 2C (36F); highest rainfall: Sella Ness, 1.64in; most sunshine: Eastbourne, 7.2hr

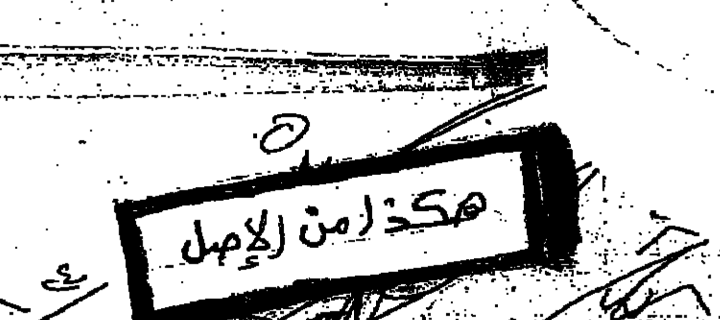
	C	F			C	F			C	F			C	F	
Ajaccio	11	52	f	Cologne	3	37	c	Madrid	5	41	s	Rome	11	52	r
Akrotiri	19	66	s	C'phagn	-3	27	c	Majorca	14	57	f	Salzburg	-1	30	sn
Alex'dria	20	68	s	Corfu	14	57	f	Malaga	15	59	f	S Frisco	9	48	f
Algiers	19	66	s	Dublin	8	46	c	Malta	17	63	s	Santiago	30	86	s
Amst'dm	5	41	f	Dubrovnik	11	52	c	Melbourne	17	63	c	S Paulo	X		
Athens	16	61	s	Faro	15	59	s	Mexico C	18	64	s	Seoul	0	32	s
Bahrain	20	68	f	Florence	3	37	r	Miami	24	75	s	Singapore	31	88	f
Bangkok	27	81	c	Frankfurt	3	37	c	Milan	8	46	f	Stockholm	-7	19	sn
Barbados	28	82	f	Funchal	17	63	f	Montreal	-19	-2	f	Strasb'rg	2	36	c
Barcelona	10	50	s	Geneva	3	37	f	Moscow	-10	14	sn	Sydney	27	81	s
Beirut	18	64	f	Gibraltar	15	59	f	Munich	1	34	c	Tangier	16	61	f
Belgrade	11	52	f	Helsinki	-11	12	sn	Nairobi	27	81	f	Tel Aviv	19	66	s
Berlin	-1	30	s	Hong K	14	57	c	Naples	13	55	s	Tenerife	19	66	f
Bermuda	21	70	f	Innsbruck	-1	30	sn	N Delhi	11	52	fg	Tokyo	11	52	s
Biarritz	10	50	c	Istanbul	13	55	f	N York	10	50	f	Toronto	-18	0	s
Bordeaux	10	50	c	Jeddah	26	79	f	Nice	10	50	s	Tunis	19	66	s
Brussels	5	41	s	Jo'burg	24	75	f	Oslo	-9	16	sn	Valencia	16	61	s
Budapest	2	36	f	L Palmas	17	63	f	Paris	4	39	f	Vanc'ver	6	43	c
B Aires	27	81	f	Le Touq't	7	45	f	Perth	26	79	s	Venice	6	43	r
Beijing	-1	30	s	Lisbon	8	46	s	Prague	-2	28	c	Vienna	1	34	f
Cairo	19	66	s	Locarno	5	41	s	Reykjavik	-5	23	f	Warsaw	0	32	s
Cape Tn	30	86	s	L Angeles	13	55	s	Rhodes	18	64	s	Wash'ton	12	54	f
Chicago	-6	21	f	Luxembg	1	34	c	Rio de J	27	81	f	Wellngton	27	81	X
Ch'church	X			Luxor	4	39	c	Riyadh	13	55	f	Zurich	1	34	sn

Temperatures at midday local time X = not available

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	-	-	12:03	3.9	Liverpool	9:43	8.4	22:05	8.4
Avonmouth	5:29	11.6	17:50	11.7	London Bridge	-	-	12:25	6.2
Belfast	9:35	3.2	21:51	3.2	Lowestoft	8:02	2.3	20:21	2.4
Cardiff	5:15	10.8	17:36	10.9	Margate	10:33	4.2	22:51	4.4
Devonport	4:02	5.0	18:25	5.0	Milford Haven	4:41	6.0	17:00	6.0
Dover	9:36	5.9	22:00	6.0	Newquay	3:35	6.0	15:54	6.1
Dublin	10:10	3.8	22:35	3.7	Oban	4:28	3.6	16:40	3.6
Falmouth	3:33	4.8	15:58	4.8	Penzance	3:06	4.9	15:25	4.9
Greenock	11:20	3.2	23:24	2.9	Portland	5:13	1.6	17:33	1.6
Harwich	10:23	3.5	22:44	3.6	Portsmouth	9:59	4.3	22:30	4.3
Holyhead	8:58	5.1	21:18	5.0	Shoreham	9:35	5.4	22:08	5.4
Hull (Albert D)	4:47	7.7	17:04	7.9	Southampton	9:27	4.2	21:57	4.1
Ilfracombe	4:24	8.0	16:44	8.1	Swansea	4:39	11.1	17:03	11.2
King's Lynn	4:54	5.5	17:16	5.8	Tees	2:05	9.3	14:27	8.5
Leith	1:03	4.8	13:20	5.0	Walton-On-Naze	10:15	3.7	22:35	3.9

All times GMT. Heights in metres.





THE TIMES 2

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY JANUARY 15 1999

Big fall in sales sees M&S issue first profits warning

By Sarah Cunningham
Retail Correspondent

A DISASTROUS fall in sales over Christmas yesterday forced Marks & Spencer, Britain's largest clothing retailer, to issue its first profits warning.

M&S shares plunged nearly 14 per cent to a six-year low as analysts cut their profit forecasts by as much as £200 million.

Peter Salsbury, appointed chief executive of the group just seven weeks ago after a bitter boardroom tussle, said that the company's mistake was to buy 10 per cent extra stock than a year earlier for this winter season. The mistake will cost it £150 million; £90 million through lost margin on marked down sales, and £60 million to cover the increased costs of the sale clearance.

Mr Salsbury said that UK sales in the five weeks to January 2 were 4.2 per cent down, even though the company has added 9 per cent more floor space. Clothing sales were down 5.2 per cent, home furnishings down 13.2 per cent and food down 1.6 per cent.

"Whichever way you look at it, these are lousy figures," Mr Salsbury said. While he said that the market was "the toughest that I can remember," he admitted that the company's difficulties were due to both "a market problem and a Marks & Spencer problem. We ordered too much in an oversupplied market".

Despite criticism of the Marks & Spencer clothing ranges this winter, he said he did not think that "styling and fashionability" had been an issue. The company's image had not been helped he said, by last November's well-publicised boardroom battle, which saw Keith Oates, deputy chairman, make an unsuccessful bid for the chief executive's job.

The battle ended with Mr Oates's departure and Sir Richard Greenbury's demotion from chairman and chief executive to non-executive chairman.

The company rushed out its Christmas trading statement yesterday, two weeks earlier than planned, after realising that it had no hope of meeting analysts' profit expectations, even though the analysts have all trimmed their forecats in recent weeks.

Sir Richard is on holiday, but was told by Mr Salsbury — who does not officially take on the job of chief executive until February — of what was happening by telephone.

"We thought it was bad but we didn't think they were down 15 per cent like-for-like (stripping out new floor space) and we certainly didn't think food was down 10 per cent like-for-like," Nick Bubb, retail analyst, at SocGen Securities said.

He revised his forecast down to £650 million, the middle of the range indicated by Marks & Spencer in yesterday's statement, and pointed out that a year ago, he was forcasting profit of £1.2 billion. The company made £1.15 billion pre-tax profit last year.

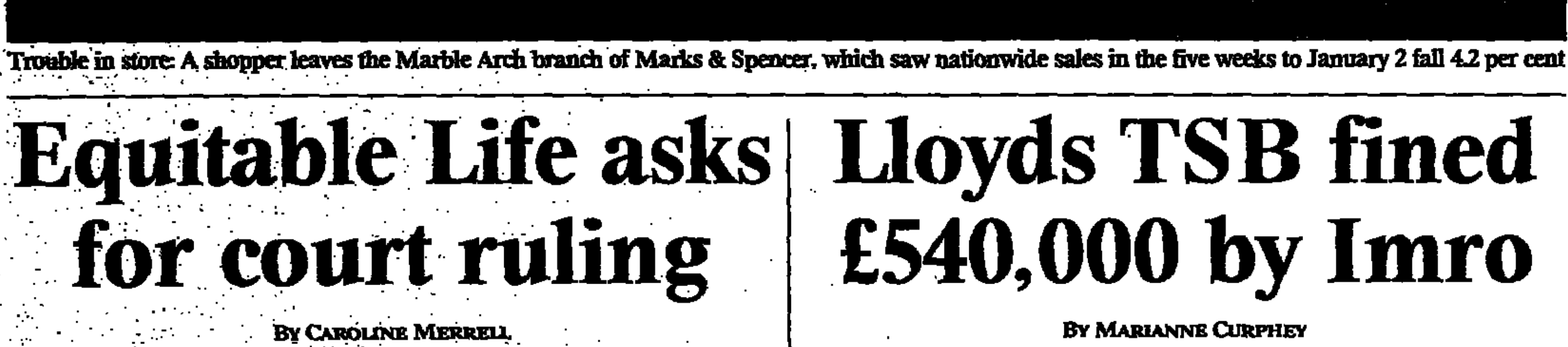
European sales were equally bad, particularly in Germany, with a rise of just 2.6 per cent in spite of 30 per cent more floor space.

The company revealed a new structure that will see the business divided into three divisions: UK retail, overseas retail and financial services.

Lord Stone of Blackheath, who was previously in charge of the food division, takes charge of UK retail. Guy McCracken, previously in charge of UK store operations, becomes managing director of overseas retail and Robert Colvill, finance director, is to be managing director of financial services.

A UK marketing division is being created, and some specialists from outside the company are to be recruited. Costs are being studied closely, and Mr Salsbury said that while redundancies are "a policy of last resort", they could not be ruled out.

Commentary, page 29, Stock market, page 30



STUART CONWAY

Trouble in store: A shopper leaves the Marble Arch branch of Marks & Spencer, which saw nationwide sales in the five weeks to January 2 fall 4.2 per cent

Barclay brothers to back Sears bid by Green

By Sarah Cunningham

FREDERICK and David Barclay, the wealthy and highly secretive businessmen, have emerged as the surprise backers of Philip Green, the retail entrepeneur who yesterday tabled a £519 million hostile cash bid for Sears, the Freemans-to-Wallis retail group.

The bid, pitched at 340p, has been accepted by Phillips & Drew, which owns 22.3 per cent of Sears, unless a counterbid of more than 360p is made.

The Sears board, chaired by Sir Bob Reid, firmly rejected the bid, saying that it undervalued the group "and would deprive shareholders of the full value of their assets".

The Barclay twins, who own the Ritz Hotel, as well as *The Scotsman* and *Sunday Business* newspapers, have teamed up with Mr Green for the bid in the past few days, although Mr Green said that they first discussed bidding for Sears eight years ago.

David's son, Aidan Barclay, is chairing January Investments, the bid vehicle. Mr Green will be chief executive. Tom Hunter, who made his fortune selling Sports Division to JJB Sports last year and who was a backer of Mr Green's two earlier, conditional, approaches to Sears, is no longer involved.

Shares in Sears rose from 310½p to 344½p — above the offer price — as investors speculated that Sir Bob and his bankers, Warburg Dillon Reid, might be able to find a white knight to push the bid price above 360p.

Advisers to the Barclays said that details of how much money they are putting into the bid will be in the offer document, expected early next week. They own 80 per cent of the new bid vehicle, with Green holding 20 per cent. Mr Green said the bid will be funded with a mixture of debt and equity.

Mr Green said yesterday: "At the end of the day, it's cash, it's unconditional and their [the current management's] track record speaks for itself. The Barclays are happy with my understanding of shops, and they have expertise in financial services and property."

The bidders, if successful, are expected to sell Freemans either to N Brown, the catalogue business chaired by Sir David Alliance, or Otto Versand, the Germany mail order group.

The deal under which Sears agreed on Wednesday to sell its credit card business is likely to go ahead if Mr Green and the Barclays succeed in their takeover. Mr Green plans to keep on running the women's wear chains — Wallis, Warehouse, Miss Selfridge and Richards.

Commentary, page 29

Business Today

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5820.2	(-29.9)
Yield	2.81%	
FTSE All Share	2654.62	(-11.19)
Nikkei	13738.86	(+335.26)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9235.50	(-114.06)*
S&P Composite	1226.91	(-7.49)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4¾%*	(4¾%)
Long bond	102⅛*	(101[illegible])
Yield	5.12%*	(5.13%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	5⅞%	(5⅞%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	119.68	(119.51)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6529*	(1.6490)
London:		
$	1.6581	(1.6526)
€	1.4172	(1.4121)
SFr	2.2547	(2.2404)
Yen	187.91	(187.83)
£ Index	99.3	(99.0)

DOLLAR

London:		
€	1.1684*	(1.1671)
SFr	1.3622*	(1.3640)
Yen	113.25*	(113.20)
$ Index	103.9	(104.0)

Tokyo close Yen 113.54

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	$11.10	($10.95)

GOLD

London close	$285.25	($285.45)

Exchange rates ......Page 28

* denotes midday trading prices

Overcharging at Lloyd's

Overcharging by brokers is the most common abuse of investors in the Lloyd's insurance market, a regulatory report disclosed yesterday. Lloyd's uncovered two significant cases of "grossing up" during 1998. Page 28

GUS cheer

Great Universal Stores has emerged as one of Britain's most resilient retailers after surviving the Christmas trading period with a 1.7 per cent sales increase for its catalogue empire. Page 29; Tempus page 30

Equitable Life asks for court ruling

By Caroline Merrell

EQUITABLE LIFE, the £24 billion life insurer, is taking a test case to the High Court to seek a ruling on its approach to paying out on guaranteed pensions.

If it loses the case, to be fought by Denton Hall, the firm of solicitors, it could be forced to pay out an additional £1 billion to the 100,000 policyholders who hold guaranteed plans.

Some industry observers believe that the extra costs could force it to consider floating on the stock market. An Equitable spokesman said: "We have no intention of losing the case." The Equitable board claims that it is staunchly in favour of retaining its mutual status.

Last year, the Equitable enraged thousands of its policyholders by cutting the value of their pensions in order to pay the high levels of income promised under their guaranteed annuity contracts. Equitable claimed that the wording of the contract allowed it to take the action.

Guaranteed annuity pension policies were routinely sold in the 1980s by many life insurance companies. They promised to pay high levels of income to those retiring. The annuity levels promised were in the region of 10 to 14 per cent based on the then high levels of interest rates. This compares to the 9 per cent paid out on today's contracts.

Recently, the Government Actuary's Department estimated that the total cost to the industry on paying out on these plans could be in the region of £7 billion to £10 billion.

Annuity Direct, an independent financial adviser, acting on behalf of policyholders, said that it had received nearly 1,000 complaints from Equitable Life policyholders.

The Financial Services Authority said yesterday that it had written to life insurance companies to give them guidance on how to reserve for the guaranteed annuity schemes.

Lloyds TSB fined £540,000 by Imro

By Marianne Curphey

A CITY watchdog has fined Lloyds TSB a total of £540,000 and ordered the bank to pay nearly £1 million in compensation for a catalogue of failures in its unit trust operation.

The hefty fine imposed by the Investment Management Regulatory Authority (Imro) reflects the severity of the charges, which date back to November 1993 and affected 5,486 customers of the bank's 20 unit trusts.

The errors were blamed on a new computer system that allowed some customers to take out two personal equity plans (Peps) in the same tax year.

The bank also failed to take a correct record of customers' national insurance numbers, which meant that it opened 2,162 Peps that were void under Inland Revenue rules. Lloyds TSB also failed to ensure that customers' money was reinvested in their unit trust or Pep plan. In other cases, customers cashed in unit trusts and personal equity plans, but were never sent cheques for the balance. Imro said that Lloyds TSB had overcharged for registration fees and failed to pay interest to customers on time.

The computer glitches also meant that investors had money incorrectly debited twice from their accounts, which meant that they became overdrawn.

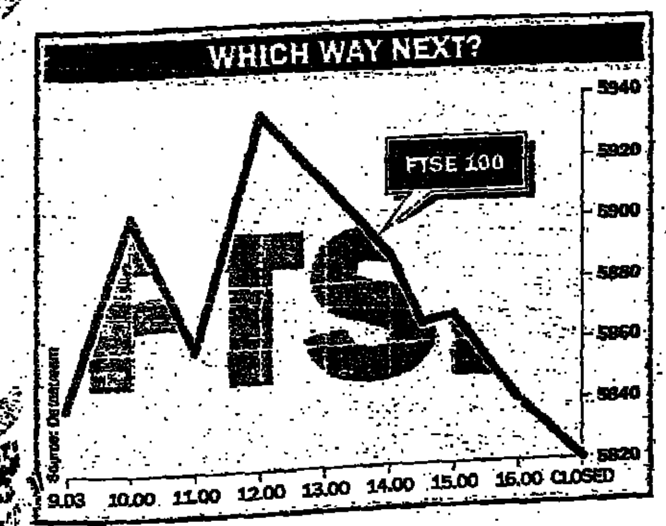
The fine includes £115,817 of costs. Imro's biggest fine to date has been the £2 million charged to Morgan Grenfell after the Peter Young affair, plus compensation of £200 million.

Lloyds TSB said: "We are extremely regretful about the circumstances surrounding this fine and we are confident that measures are in place to prevent it happening again."

A spokeswoman for Imro said: "It was good luck, rather than good management, that further problems did not arise."

Nervous FTSE on a roller-coaster

By Alasdair Murray, Economic Correspondent



EQUITY markets suffered another nervous day trading yesterday but avoided a repeat of Wednesday's slump as the worst fears about Brazil's currency devaluation failed to materialise.

European markets even managed to hold small gains in early trading before a slide on Wall Street forced most shares lower.

In London shares endured a roller-coaster day, at one stage trading 87 points higher before closing down 29.9 points at 5,820.2 after the Dow Jones index slumped 220 points in morning trading. The Frankfurt DAX also recorded a fall of nearly 2 per cent but shares in Paris bucked the trend to close modestly higher.

The Brazilian stock market also recorded early gains after the Government reported the country had lost $1.1 billion (£667 million) due to capital flight on Wednesday, far less than analysts had estimated.

The Brazilian Central Bank also provided a short-term confidence boost by publishing borrowing data which it claimed showed the country was on track to meet targets agreed with the International Monetary Fund.

The Central Bank said the country's nominal budget deficit widened to 7.45 per cent of GDP in the ten months to October. Brazil agreed with the IMF to keep its budget deficit for 1998 as a whole to 9.6 per cent of total GDP as part of an accord to access an IMF-led $41.5 billion international loan.

The G7 group of leading industrialised countries also offered support to Brazil, insisting that its existing reform programme would prove sufficient to contain the crisis.

However, the initial optimism quickly faded, with analysts predicting that the real will need to devalue further and that the Government's budget reform plans still face a hostile reception in the Brazilian parliament. Shares slid 3 per cent while the real remained stuck fast at the edge of its new trading band of 132 real to the dollar.

The currency markets enjoyed a quieter day, with the pound and the euro making only modest further gains against the dollar. Sterling closed at $1.6578 from $1.6522.

Slump in consumer confidence arrested

THE catastrophic falls in British consumer confidence seen last autumn appear to have been arrested by sharp cuts in interest rates, according to a report today from Business Strategies, the economic consultancy.

Although the proportion of consumers expecting the economy to improve over the next year remains low, and people are scared about their job prospects, overall confidence has not worsened since October and, in some regions, has improved.

Confidence in Northern Ireland, Greater London, Scotland and the West Midlands has picked up, echoing the modest improvements in business confidence seen in a number of recent surveys, including this week's report from the Institute of Directors.

Business Strategies said: "This turnaround in views suggests that in the third quarter of 1998 consumers were probably overreacting to media hype about the state of the economy."

It added: "Following the decision by the Monetary Policy Committee to lower interest rates, the easing of criticism and a general lack of financial crises, consumers have now appeared to moderate their opinions."

Despite glimmerings of a recovery in confidence, however, Business Strategies is predicting a slowdown in consumer spending growth to an average of only 0.5 per cent this year compared with 3.6 per cent in 1998.

Business Strategies has one of the lowest forecasts for growth this year of any independent forecasters at only 0.6 per cent. The average of more than 40 forecasts is 0.8 per cent.

There are also tentative signs of renewed confidence about household finances (as opposed to the broad economy). The most dramatic turnaround has been in Greater London, which saw a sharp downward revision in expectations in October's report. In Business Strategies's latest report, expectations of household *finances* in Greater London are now somewhat higher than they were in the second quarter. A similar, if smaller, turnaround was reported in *Yorkshire and* the Humber, the West Midlands and Northern Ireland.

However, households in some regions, notably the North and South West have deteriorated, despite lower interest rates, because of concerns about prospects for the economy and particularly for employment.

Another indicator of continuing fragility was a fall in the number of consumers who believe that now is the right time to make a big purchase. Optimism about spending on large items is at a two-year low, according to Business Strategies.

Supporting the view that less-alarmist media coverage in more recent weeks may have helped to stabilise consumer confidence was a finding by Merrill Lynch that reference to the word "recession" in the press was 40 per cent lower in December than it had been in October.

JANET BUSH

Abbey National in €2bn eurobond issue

ABBEY NATIONAL has launched the biggest eurobond issue in the private sector, raising €2 billion (£1.4 billion) through Barclays Capital, the investment banking arm of the high street bank. The deal was reported in the City last night as a boost for Barclays Capital, the future of which has been at the centre of intense speculation since the resignation of Martin Taylor as chief executive of Barclays Bank in November. Barclays Capital also acted yesterday as the co-manager with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson on a £450 million eurobond issue for National Grid, as well as joint lead with Salomon Smith Barney on a $3 billion (£1.8 billion) bond for the US institution, Federal Home Loan Banks.

The Abbey deal, the largest euro-denominated transaction to date, is in floating-rate notes: debt whose interest payments vary with changes to the underlying interest rate of the currency of issue, in this case, the euro. The three-year eurobonds are expected to be sold to fund managers and insurance companies across the world. Abbey National has a credit rating of Aa2/AA and is the fifth largest UK bank in terms of assets.

Universal Music structure

British employees of Universal Music, the record group formed by the merger of PolyGram and Seagram of Canada, yesterday received little reassurance about their future as the company unveiled the new structure of its UK operations.

Up to 3,000 jobs are expected to be lost worldwide after the $10.4 billion (£6.5 billion) deal, but the company has so far refused to give details.

John Kennedy, head of Universal's UK division, yesterday said that PolyGram's Mercury and Polydor labels would remain more or less as they were before the merger, and Island — home to bands such as U2 — would merge with Universal Records and be housed under the same roof at a new site.

Mercury *will* also assume responsibility for the UK marketing of Island's US repertoire. *Meanwhile, Polydor will* take on the UK marketing of the Los Angeles labels Interscope, Geffen, and *DreamWorks.*

Shake-up at Sun Life of Canada

Sun Life of Canada (SLOC), the mutual insurer planning to join the stock market in autumn, has made three appointments to strengthen its UK team. Steve Melcher, who joined as general manager of SLOC's UK operations from Allied Dunbar and Eagle Star, is shaking up its senior management team after just a month in the job as preparation for demutualisation.

Paul Davies, formerly managing director of Eagle Star Direct and Preferred Direct, is to be SLOC's vice-president of operations.

Mark Sismey-Durrant, chief executive of Sun Bank, becomes marketing manager.

SLOC is also shaking up its IT team by bringing in Karen Steele, former IT director of First Direct and part of the telephone bank's launch team.

The new senior managers will be responsible for both retail and corporate business. Under the old structure, the two divisions were entirely separate.

Hogg disposal

Hogg Robinson, the outsourcing and consultancy group, yesterday announced that Bennett BTI, its Nordic subsidiary, is selling its 11 Swedish Leisure Travel shops to Bengt Martins, a private Swedish travel group. The gross proceeds of the sale are SKr37 million (£2.79 million), giving an exceptional profit of SKr28.5 million on the deal.

IPC

IPC Magazines, the consumer magazine publisher, announced 200 redundancies on Wednesday, not 600 as our headline indicated (Business News, January 14).

Overcharging by brokers is number one offence at Lloyd's

By Richard Miles

LLOYD'S has identified overcharging by brokers as the most common abuse of investors in the international insurance market, it emerged yesterday.

Grossing-up — overcharging clients by misrepresenting the premium paid to underwriters — was "the number one offence" in the market, said David Gittings, director of regulation.

In its regulatory plan for 1999, Lloyd's said its monitoring of transactions with high brokerage costs had uncovered two major cases of grossing-up, with the largest amounting to more than $2 million (£1.25 million).

The plan also reveals that Lloyd's suspended six members during 1998 for offences ranging from lodging fraudulent insurance claims to the misappropriation of client funds. In addition, it permanently revoked the right of Cuthbert Heath Underwriting to do business and fined it £125,000 for understating its assets and liabilities 1987-1990.

Over the past few years, Lloyd's has strengthened its regulations with a view to restoring confidence in the market, much dented by past scandals. Many brokers complain that the compliance burden is now too heavy, but Mr Gittings said it was not the right time to lighten the regulatory load.

He said that market conditions were tough and gave warning that some syndicates would suffer losses, while smaller brokers would find it very difficult to survive. "There is too much capacity chasing the business. We have to be particularly alert in conditions like that," Mr Gittings said.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) will eventually assume responsibility for the regulation of Lloyd's and has published a consultation paper outlining its proposals. It is expected that the FSA will leave on-the-ground supervision to the market's regulation division, treating Lloyd's much like any other exchange or market.

Mr Gittings said the scope of the regulation should reflect the increasingly professional environment at Lloyd's. More than 70 per cent of the market's capacity is now controlled by corporate investors, following the introduction of limited liability membership. Independent management agents are fast disappearing as the providers of capital acquire them.

Mr Gittings said: "Lloyd's needs a system of regulation appropriate to tomorrow's market, not yesterday's. Lloyd's is a wholesale, professionals' market and must be regulated as such. We cannot, in the late 1990s, continue to operate without question the regulatory arrangements that were introduced to address the problems of the 1980s." Lloyd's has budgeted total operating expenditure on regulation for 1999 at £9.5 million.

BARRY GREENWOOD

ML LABORATORIES, the drugs and medical devices company, does not expect to have to ask shareholders to top up its £12.5 million of cash, despite a large rise in annual losses to £8.4 million. The company is hoping to enjoy a substantial increase in revenues, having recently secured its fourth product approval licence — for Dexemel, a solution to deliver drugs into the abdomen.

Under Stuart Sim, chief executive, right, and Peter Shennan, financial director, it is already earning royalties from Extraneal, a kidney dialysis solution being sold by Baxter Healthcare, and from its Clickhaler inhaler that Medeva is using for two asthma drugs. After a strong run since last month, ML's shares fell 9½p to 88p. Three years ago, their price peaked at 468½p.

Stagecoach gets deal extension

By Saeed Shah

STAGECOACH, the passenger transport group, was yesterday given one more week to hammer out a deal for Citybus, a Hong Kong bus operator, with Citybus's controlling shareholder, CNT Group.

Stagecoach, which has paid CNT a deposit of HK$10 million (£781,000), had exclusive right of negotiation up to *January 13 for the CNT stake, at an* indicative price of HK$2 a share. The new deadline is January 20, with a lower indicative price of HK1.95 a share, or a total of HK$2.34 billion (£183 million) for the stake.

CNT has a 36 per cent interest in Citybus, which runs one of three franchises in Hong Kong, and provides cross-border services to southern China.

Stagecoach lost out to FirstGroup for China Motor Bus, Hong Kong's largest bus franchise. It is still nursing a £21.3 million paper loss on its badly timed £67 million investment in Road King Infrastructure, which runs toll roads in the dynamic Chinese province of Guangdong.

Stagecoach bought a 20 per cent stake at HK$8 a share in April, a little before the Hong Kong market crash. Yesterday Road King closed at HK$5.45, having underperformed Hong Kong's Hang Seng index by some 25 per cent since the Stagecoach purchase.

Britannic chief warns on Isas

By Gavin Lumsden

BRIAN SHAW, chief executive of Britannic Assurance, a leading home service insurer, has warned the Government that individual savings accounts (Isas) are unlikely to attract millions of poorer people in the way ministers intend.

Mr Shaw, whose company specialises in investments for low-income households, said that *Isa tax incentives were too* small to be meaningful for most poor people. For example, income from shares will benefit from a 10 per cent tax credit, but only for five years.

Britannic has 1.2 million customers, 70 per cent of whom earn less than the average wage. Most of these, Mr Shaw said, would not find an Isa appealing, making it unlikely that the Government would reach its target of six million new savers. "The Government should add 10 per cent to people's money if they are serious about encouraging lower-income savers," he said.

Britannic still plans to offer all Isa components — cash, *insurance and equity — in April.*

Britannic's latest sales figures yesterday lifted its shares 34p to £12.54. Excluding pensions based on *contracted-out* Serps contributions, new premium income last year was £53 million, up 14.9 per cent.

Tempus, page 30

GEC plays waiting game over Marconi

By Adam Jones

GEC is in the closing stages of merger talks with both British Aerospace and Thomson-CSF of France, playing the rival companies off against each other until the very last minute to maximise the value of its Marconi defence electronics arm.

It is almost certain that GEC will only pick one of the two companies as its partner and a provisional deal could be announced within the next few weeks.

Speculation has recently centred on a deal with BAe, but Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, the GEC chief executive, and John Mayo, the finance director, were in Paris yesterday, talking to Thomson about a merger with Marconi, which it is preparing to spin off.

The two companies are thought to be haggling over Marconi's valuation, with Mr Mayo understood to be suggesting £8 billion and the French putting the cash value closer to £5 billion. However, the French valuation increases when the cost benefits of the deal, estimated at £500 million, are factored in.

Any deal would probably see a French chairman and British chief executive appointed, with the company having a London listing. Neither Lord Simpson nor Mr Mayo are thought to want to lead it.

Thomson is thought to have offered assurances that it is willing to cut jobs to achieve planned merger savings. The French Government would take its stake down to about 5 per cent of the merged group.

Parallel negotiations with BAe continue. A merger between the long-time British rivals would lead to estimated savings of £300 million a year.

Observers see a US deal, with Northrop Grumman or *Lockheed, as less likely at this* stage, although GEC is still thought to have a negotiator in the US. One source questioned whether an American contractor would make such a bold move before the US Department of Defense had clarified its position on mergers and foreign involvement in the sector.

Software inquiry call

SOFTWARE users and vendors are calling for an Office of Fair Trading investigation into the price of software upgrades related to the millennium bug. Eurim, an IT parliamentary lobby group, whose members include BP, Nestlé and Guardian Royal Exchange, is investigating claims that some IT companies charge six-figure fees for millennium upgrades. A Eurim official said yesterday: "We are looking for solid evidence. This problem is not affecting large companies, but if smaller firms are affected it could disrupt supply chains."

Hostile bid for Hall

HALL ENGINEERING, the diversified engineering group, has rejected a hostile bid from TT Group, the acquisitive engineer, as "unsolicited and unwelcome". The 97p a share offer values Hall at £51.8 million, a premium of 38 per cent to the price on January 4, when TT began purchasing Hall shares. However, the offer is well below yesterday's closing price of 119p. TT holds about 1.45 per cent of Hall's shares. John Sword, managing director at Hall, said the bid "grossly undervalues" the company.

W&DB delay

WOLVERHAMPTON & Dudley Breweries is expected to delay deciding whether to raise its offer for Marston Thompson & Evershed until later this month after a decision yesterday *by the Takeover Panel to revise the bid timetable. Originally,* W&DB had until the end of today to lift its £262 million offer. However, because of Marston's so-called Pac-Man counter-bid for W&DB, the Panel has pushed the schedule back. The *exact timetable will depend on when Marston's issues its bid* document. Both companies welcomed the Panel's decision.

Enterprise loses Hope

ENTERPRISE OIL is slimming down its board with the retirement of Mark Hope, technical director. The oil company has frozen recruitment and is expected to announce redundancies next month relating to the transfer of North Sea operations to Aberdeen. A spokesman for Enterprise said that Mr Hope, who is in his mid-40s, was leaving by mutual agreement and would receive compensation based on his one-year service contract and a salary of £160,000. Mr Hope's responsibilities will be taken on by Andrew Armour, exploration director.

Unipart's Jaguar deal

UNIPART, the components group, yesterday clinched a ten-year deal to provide a worldwide parts service to Jaguar. The contract is a substantial expansion of the company's dealings with Jaguar. Unipart would not say how much the Jaguar deal is worth but said it was a "significant" step in the race to find new business. Before the new contract, Unipart handled Jaguar components in the UK, some parts of Europe and North America — which was added late last year. Now it will supply virtually all the parts to 400,000 Jaguars worldwide.

Gresham boosted

GRESHAM COMPUTING, the software services provider, lifted profits by more than 150 per cent last year. Four acquisitions boosted turnover from £8.7 million to £23.1 million for the year ended October 31, with pre-tax profits up to £3 million (£1.2 million). Earnings per share were up to 5.73p (2.37p) and the dividend was increased from 0.5p to 0.6p. Roger Graham, chairman, said that the goal for the group in the coming year was "to establish a meaningful presence in the buoyant US market". Shares of the company were up 4½p to 124p.

Sports group ahead

SPORTS and Outdoor Media International, the international sports advertising business, yesterday announced its first results since floating on the Alternative Investment Market last July. On a pro-forma basis, the company earned a pre-tax profit of £430,948 for the six months to September 30, on a turnover of £5.1 million. Basic earnings per share were 0.81p. There is no interim dividend. John Beckwith, chairman, said that "current trading remains strong", adding that "an exciting new development will be announced shortly".

Danka extends pact

DANKA BUSINESS SYSTEMS, the troubled supplier of office equipment, has announced the extension of its interim agreement with Eastman Kodak. Kodak will continue to *supply parts, supplies and equipment to Danka up to the end* of this month. The two remain in discussions about a long-term supply relationship. Danka last month announced the termination of its research and development and supply *contracts with Kodak, which it said would save it more than* $150 million (£89 million) over the next three to four years.

Wall Street loses taste for Planet Hollywood

From Oliver August in New York

PLANET HOLLYWOOD yesterday served its investors a nasty meal of negative cash flow for starters, a $160 million charge with the main course, followed by a salad of closures, cost cuts and asset sales.

The chain restaurant group announced a complete revamp of its operations after one of the most spectacular falls from grace in the restaurant sector.

The charge will help to pay for a refurbishment of the theme restaurants which rapidly lost business over the past two years after drawing strong crowds after their opening in the early 1990s. The group, which has relied heavily on promotional support from Hollywood stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone, said half the restaurants would be refurbished by the middle of this year.

Planet Hollywood will also team up with Fruit of the Loom and hire a design consultancy to shore up merchandise sales. T-shirts and sweaters account for a sizeable chunk of revenue. William Baumhauer, company president, said: "The intent of our plan is a return to basics. Planet Hollywood is a powerful brand that needs to be refreshed, refocused and relaunched."

Extra cash will also be spent on a public relations blitz. But Wall Street has long despaired of the group. The shares have crashed from a high of $28 to just $3. Fourth-quarter sales are down more than a quarter to $75 million from $102 million. The company expects negative cash flow of $10 million to $15 million after interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation are deducted from earnings.



Schwarzenegger: support

Secrets of Soros and Buffett to go on Net

From Oliver August in New York

THE secrets of George Soros and Warren Buffett are to be made available to anyone with access to the Internet. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is forcing high-profile fund managers to disclose the content of their portfolios electronically.

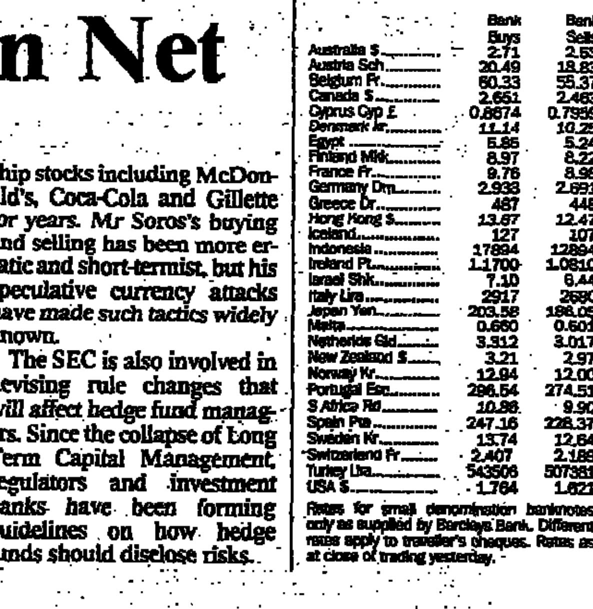
Instead of filing a paper copy of the disclosure form, fund managers will in future complete an online form immediately accessible on the SEC website.

The disclosure forms have to be filed every quarter by fund managers who oversee assets worth more than $100 *million (£60 million) in the* US. Mr Soros's funds total about $17 billion and Mr Buffett's listed investment holding company, Berkshire Hathaway, has a market value of $80 billion.

Investors have always been *keen to know where the top* fund managers put money in the hope that emulating their moves will yield top returns.

Mr Buffett's long-term buying has been easy to copy. He has held and praised blue chip stocks including McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Gillette *for years. Mr Soros's buying* and selling has been more erratic and short-termist, but his speculative currency attacks *have made such tactics widely* known.

The SEC is also involved in devising rule changes that will affect hedge fund managers. Since the collapse of Long Term Capital Management, regulators and investment banks have been forming guidelines on how hedge funds should disclose risks.



	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.71	2.53
Austria Sch	20.49	18.83
Belgium Fr	60.33	55.37
Canada $	2.651	2.463
Cyprus Cyp £	0.8674	0.7959
Denmark Kr	11.14	10.25
Egypt	5.85	5.24
Finland Mkk	8.97	8.22
France Fr	9.76	8.98
Germany Dm	2.938	2.691
Greece Dr	487	448
Hong Kong $	13.67	12.47
Iceland	127	107
Indonesia	17894	12894
Ireland Pt	1.1700	1.0810
Israel Shk	7.10	6.44
Italy Lira	2917	2690
Japan Yen	203.58	186.05
Malta	0.660	0.601
Netherlds Gld	3.312	3.017
New Zealand $	3.21	2.97
Norway Kr	12.94	12.00
Portugal Esc	296.54	274.51
S Africa Rd	10.86	9.90
Spain Pta	247.16	226.37
Sweden Kr	13.74	12.64
Switzerland Fr	2.407	2.189
Turkey Lira	543506	507381
USA $	1.764	1.621

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Spring cleaning starts at M&S



COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

"Spring begins with ... Fresh Start." So proclaimed Marks & Spencer yesterday. This cheerily positive message actually accompanied a publicity package showing the stylish outfits now heading into M&S stores. Yet there was no mistaking Peter Salsbury's efforts to demonstrate that spring has come early in Baker Street and there is a fresh start there, too.

Given the dreadful trading figures from the group, there needs to be. Writing off £60 million of stock may enable the new chief executive to feel that he is starting his reign with a clean sheet but the City will need convincing that he has the right ideas, and the right people, to ensure that a bright start to spring does not finish in a winter of discontent.

The top team that he was parading yesterday was, with the notable exception of Sir Richard Greenbury, who was behaving himself in his new non-executive role by being on holiday, the same top team as before. But as Mr Salsbury pointed out, their record as retailers should hardly consign them to the scrap heap.

Yet while he is keen to portray the disastrous last season as an aberration, for which he and his colleagues accept cabinet responsibility, the factors which allowed it to happen seem to demonstrate an organisation in need of radical change. After a decade of retail experts trumpeting the advantages of supply chain management and the merits of "just in time" supply systems, M&S appears to have been placing its orders by quill pen.

Apparently, its problems last season stemmed from the conviction that it would increase sales by 10 per cent. It ordered stock accordingly. When it became clear that customers were not obliging, the only stock it could cancel was the most recently requested, with the end result that, as Christmas approached, it was left with a stale overhang from October.

Hard to believe? Well, just take a look at all those short sleeved shirts singularly failing to attract the attention of City chaps in the Moorgate branch of M&S on a cold January day. Neither were they rushing to buy the pinstripe jackets, devoid of matching trousers, either.

But if M&S has in the past managed to do so well despite a structure which seemed to treat buying and selling as unassociated operations, just think what the possibilities might be for the company if it could match its still affectionate customers with a twenty-first century approach to the business.

Mr Salsbury is treading carefully but he has at least acknowledged the need for change. The hunt is on for a senior marketing executive from outside and more new blood will be recruited.

And with Sir Richard on the beach, the existing executives may prove more innovative. After all, Lord Stone has decided that Baker Street is now more enticing than the House of Lords, where he is cutting back on his commitments in favour of a full-time return to M&S.

Alarming ghosts of messes past

Thorough regulation, by its nature, exposes errors and malpractices that might go undetected, or at least find no redress, under casual regimes where customers are on their own. So we should not get too hysterical every time a regulator turns up a stone and finds something nasty somewhere in the vast and diverse financial services industry. Yet the endless tide of basic errors and failure to deal with them, a dozen years after the Financial Services Act was passed, is pretty depressing.

Yesterday saw two more instances. Lloyds TSB was fined by a regulator and had to compensate customers over some basic howlers in running personal equity plans. And the Treasury's campaign to clear up the pension mis-selling scandal at long last saw two networks of financial advisers named for failing to keep up even with the latest schedule of dealing with priority cases.

The Lloyds TSB case invites despair. Here is the sort of organisation you might not look to for fireworks but you would expect to get the administration right. Yet operatives just overrode computer programs, resulting in plans being duplicated, which is illegal. Other big names have suffered comparable failures. And the errors rumbled on.

Come the spring, the era of relatively simple Peps will be over. The industry will have to grapple with the much stiffer challenge of individual savings accounts, the joke that grinning Geoffrey Robinson left behind. The plans are much more complex because they have three different streams with different rules. There are many more options, much scope for switching smaller sums more frequently but also petty rules and barriers to stop supposed tax loopholes. Can potential customers have much faith in the industry to get the electronic paperwork right?

Some of those participating will be the same as the providers and advisers caught up in mis-selling personal pensions. One substantial organisation, it turns out, has still not dealt with 70 per cent of priority review cases.

The Financial Services Authority has already started advertising for other customers who think they might have been wronged to start the second round of reviews. Is this the right atmosphere in which to launch yet another new form of private pension, as ministers intend?

The future will be more complex than the past. The industry must consign past errors to history faster and relearn the basics of good practice if it is to cope.

Reid's slim chance at Sears

A bid from anyone was what Sir Bob Reid had hoped to avoid but a bid from Philip Green was the one he dreaded most. For not once but twice Mr Green has demonstrated an ability to buy from Sears and make a rapid turn. That Sears should have sold him Olympus so cheaply when sportswear was all the rage hardly reflected well on the vendor. That Mr Green should have managed to exit from the deal so profitably, to the current chagrin of the purchasers, was a demonstration of how fleet of foot he can be, even without the latest pair of Nikes.

Sir Bob's chances of persuading battered Sears shareholders that they will be better to stay with him than take the Barclay brothers' cash seem slim. He and Warburgs may judge his only hope of surviving the Green clutches to be a white knight. As one wit remarked yesterday, the only place he is likely to find one of those is to head round to Selfridges and buy a chess set.

There may be someone waiting in the wings to trump the Green offer, and clearly Phillips & Drew is hoping that there could be 360p a share on offer. But the fact that the firm would prefer to take 340p from Mr Green than rely on Sir Bob and his team to generate value sends a clear message.

In the meantime, Sears is examining whether a rapid asset sale might keep Mr Green at bay. Anyone want to buy a shop or two or a mail order company? Please.

Cold comfort

AS brewers and restaurateurs bemoan the effects of Sydney flu, it is cheering to hear that Boots is finding it hard to keep pace with the demand for cold remedies. This seasonal bonus may, perhaps, help the company to overcome its inevitable disappointment at the departure of Peter Mandelson from the DTI. After holding out against a barrage of persuasion, the company succumbed and, at the end of last year, agreed to pouring money into the Dome. Will Stephen Byers appreciate the generosity?

Resilient GUS reveals rise in catalogue sales

By Fraser Nelson

GREAT Universal Stores has emerged as one of Britain's most resilient retailers after surviving the Christmas trading period with a 1.7 per cent sales increase for its catalogue empire.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, GUS chairman, said Argos increased sales over Christmas and had reduced its October-December sales decline from 4 per cent to 2 per cent.

This relieved City fears that Lord Wolfson had discovered a black hole in Argos after paying £1.9 billion for the company last year — and that this was fuelling his fight to prove he was misled during the hostile bid.

Lord Wolfson said: "Argos was recovering when we bought it. We never thought we paid too much, and it is performing as we expected."

Shares of GUS rose 26p to 607p, against the trend in the retail sector, on the day as a string of retailers returned their Christmas trading results.

Boots shares fell by 6.1 per cent to 938p as the company said sales of its gifts range — CDs, videos and kitchenware — plunged by 22 per cent in the last three months of the year.

It said: "We are clearly up against big competition for selling videos like Titanic so we're retracting from the sector. The big stores are winning."

This reduced sales growth at its core chemist shops to 1.5 per cent, helped by the return of winter flu. The Boots opticians division managed 3.1 per cent underlying sales growth and Halfords scored 2.6 per cent underlying growth for the quarter.

Storehouse was also heavily punished after returning its results for the 12 weeks to January 2, where underlying sales fell by 4.5 in Bhs and by 6.1 per cent in Mothercare.

The company said it is not chasing sales growth but refurbishing stores and lifting profit margins in Bhs instead. It blamed temporary manufacturing problems for the Mothercare shortfall.

House of Fraser results were much better received, although its sales growth under John Coleman, the chief executive, slowed to 0.2 per cent for the 21 weeks to Christmas Eve. Its shares added 4p to 57½p.

Like Storehouse, the department store company said its main priority is lifting profit margins — adding that sales growth was slow because it had predicted a Christmas slump and had reduced orders.

David Adams, finance director, said: "We have sacrificed a little bit of sales, but we've increased our margins and in the circumstances that's a good result. But like the others, we've been knocked sideways by market conditions."

Richard Ratner, analyst at Seymour Pierce, said the results show that shoppers are deserting "middle ground" retailers such as Bhs and Marks & Spencer in favour of aspiration brands such as Next and Oasis.

John Coleman, of House of Fraser, had a better reception

GAME in supply sales glitch

GAME, the newly floated computer games retailer, yesterday blamed a delay in supply of Sony Playstations for dismal Christmas trading figures which sent its shares down 37 per cent (Fraser Nelson writes).

Neil Taylor, chairman, said he was able to stock just 30,000 of the Sony games consoles over Christmas when he could have sold 45,000 — denying the company £363,000 of profit.

Its sales growth evaporated into a 3.9 per cent decline over Christmas. Pre-tax profit was £744,000 (£172,000) for the 26 weeks to November 1 and earnings were 0.7p (0.2p) per share. The shares, which joined the market at 200p in May last year, fell 62p to 103½p yesterday.

Favourites make Stanley suffer

By Manus Costello

STANLEY LEISURE, the bookmaker and casino operator, yesterday said that trading was being hit because more favourites were winning horseraces.

Announcing a 43 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the first half, Michael Riddy, finance director, said: "Margins were exceptional in the first half, and produced record results, but so far third-quarter margins have not been so great. More favourites have been winning which is not good for us."

Pre-tax profits rose to £14.5 million from £10.1 million in the half-year to November 1. Earnings were 9p a share (6.3p). The interim dividend rises to 1.65p from 1.4p.

The company said its failed bid for Coral, the rival bookmaker that was eventually sold to Morgan Grenfell, cost less than £200,000. Leonard Steinberg, chairman, said the company was "disappointed" not to have made the acquisition.

Mr Steinberg said new regulations on fruit machines, which have already benefited Stanley's casino division, would eventually lead to the first £100,000 prize.

The company also revealed that its new chief executive is to be Robert Wiper, currently chief executive of the coach division of National Express. He succeeds Mike Kershaw, who retires in April. Stanley shares fell 8p to 303½p.

Tempus, page 30

Booker plans disposal

By Robert Cole

BOOKER, the troubled food group, has put its caterer supply business up for sale in one of the first strategic moves by Stuart Rose, chief executive since last autumn.

Booker is struggling under debt, and last year said that it had breached banking covenants. It has facilities to cover £600 million of debt, but the sum used varies with trading.

However, Mr Rose said that selling the Foodservice subsidiary was not being done solely to cut debt. He said that Foodservice did not fit his ideas for Booker. The sale is the first to be ordered by Mr Rose, but comes after decisions to sell peripheral businesses in food manufacturing. The sales will leave Booker solely as a cash-and-carry food wholesaler.

Foodservice's 1997 operating profits of £12.1 million on £900 million turnover, and its maintained profitablity in 1998's first half, indicate its price could be at least £100 million.

Booker's finance director since 1993 left yesterday. John Kitson is said to be leaving "by mutual agreement". Mr Rose said that possible compensation for loss of office was being negotiated. Mr Kitson had a two-year rolling service contract and was paid £166,000 according to the 1997 annual report. He is to be replaced by Steven Glew, currently finance director of Tesco Ireland.





Investors suffer further in helter-skelter trading

INVESTORS endured another helter-skelter session as the fallout from the Brazilian economic crisis continued to be felt. The London market frittered away a promising rally in late trading after Wall Street kicked in with opening losses that saw the Dow Jones industrial average suffer a further 150-point fall.

The FTSE 100 index, which had been sporting a rise of almost 90 points early in the session, soon went into reverse. But it managed to close above the low point of the day with a fall of 29.9 at 5,820.2. It stretches the losses during the past two days to 213.4 points.

Turnover was again on the high side with 1.3 billion shares changing hands as nervous investors tried to plot the next move in US fortunes.

Shares of **Wembley** raced up 24½p to 376p amid claims that **Enic**, ½p lighter at 113½p, may be prepared to raise its offer of 412p to 500p.

Brokers claim it wants to make the move in order to kill the proposed sale of Wembley Stadium to English National Stadium Development Company, backed by the Football Association, for £103 million. Some heavy turnover was recorded in **Rentokil Initial** with the price easing 2¼p to 443¾p as 16.1 million shares were traded. This included a put through in a line of 5.7 million shares at 449½p. These were later sold on at 450p.

The Marks & Spencer factor reverberated throughout the market. Those to feel the most heat from its profits warning were its main suppliers with **Courtaulds Textiles** 1p lighter at 135p, while **Dewhirst Group**, which sells the bulk of its output to M&S, fell 6½p to 77½p. There were also losses for **Sterling Group**, 1p to 23½p, and **William Baird**, 6½p to 93½p, **Coats Viyella**, ½p to 27¾p, and **Peter Black**, 14p to 245p. Its main food suppliers also took a hit with **Northern Foods** down 8p to 113½p and **Terranova Foods** easing 2½p to 93p.

Meanwhile, Credit Suisse First Boston, the broker, saw fit to reiterate its "sell" recommendation for **Next**, down 7¼p to 552¼p, in the wake of the news from M&S.

Speculative support hoisted **Flextech** 46p to 677p. The television broadcaster whose channels include UK Gold and Bravo. Speculators claim it has started to attract the attention of **Carlton Communications**, down 3½p at 552p.

BT Alex Brown, the broker, is taking an upbeat view of **Whitbread**, 4p dearer at 779p, and **Bass**, 1½p better at 788p. It comes in stark contrast to the cautious comments earlier this week by Lehman Brothers, the US securities house. Lehman gave warning that the big pub chains faced the prospect of negative investment returns as trading conditions deteriorated. BTAB takes the view that Bass and Whitbread are the strongest operators in the sector and proving to be more resilient than originally feared.

Claims that **Granada**, down 33½p to £10.67, may want to turn its hand to the pub game were doing the rounds in the Square Mile. Word is the cash-rich leisure group may be casting an eye over the likes of **Greenalls**, 1½p lighter at 290p, or even Whitbread. Analysts, however, were sceptical.


Stock shortages of popular games such as Tomb Raider saw Game, the computer games retailer, fall 62p to 103½p

TELEPHONE NUMBERS — FTSE 350 Telecommunications Index; FTSE all-share index (rebased). Source: Datastream. 2,000–6,500; Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

VODAFONE nudged towards its peak of £11.10½ with a rise of 12p to £10.51½ as two brokers simultaneously raised their share price targets.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and BT Alex Brown both say the shares will hit £15 if the merger with AirTouch Communications in the US is concluded at the right price and Vodafone is not drawn into a bid battle.

Andrew Beale, at BTAB, says the enlarged group will be capable of producing "super charged" earnings growth of 30 per cent. This latest piece of bullish news was guaranteed to generate a fresh burst of institutional support for a sector that has already outperformed everything else around it.

Gains were also recorded in Orange, 24p to 897p, Cable & Wireless, 11½p to 828p, Securicor, 6½p to 566p, Telewest, 15¼p to 218p and Colt Telecom, 12p to £10.30.

Dealers say that while there is still genuine demand, stock shortages are fuelling some of the gains.

News of stakebuilding lifted **Caradon** 5½p to 112p. Franklin Resources now speaks for 69.96 million shares, or 14.9 per cent. Earlier this week, Jürgen Hintz, chief executive, topped up his holding in the company with the purchase of an extra 24,947 shares at 105p. It takes his total holding to 691,002, or less than 1 per cent.

Advanced Power Components was steady at 34½p ahead of today's annual meeting, which is expected to provide cheer for shareholders. The group is supplying components for use with ISDN lines to Motorola. The deal has attracted orders from Germany, South Korea and China.

On-Line, the Internet provider, goes from strength to strength with the price surging 17½p to 75p in a thin market. The price this week, alone, has come up from 16½p.

Game tumbled 62p, or 37 per cent, to 103½p on the back of a profits warning. The computer games retailer blamed a delay in store openings and stock shortages. Brokers will have to downgrade profit forecasts of £10 million with like-for-like sales down 4 per cent. In the six months to November 1, Game raised pretax profits from £200,000 to £700,000. Rival **Gremlin Group** dropped 7½p to 73½p in sympathy.

□ **GILT-EDGED:** Prices recovered from a slow start boosted by the consumer price numbers in the US. Gains at the longer end stretched to about 50p as US Treasury bonds kicked in higher.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished 17p better at £119.68 as 33,000 contracts were completed. Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 was 46p dearer at £150.90, while among shorter-dated issues Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 3p firmer at £107.94.

□ **NEW YORK:** US shares were down as investors, nervous about corporate earnings and high valuations, took profits. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 114.06 points to 9,235.50.

Due to problems at our suppliers, the recent issues and rights issues are Wednesday's.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 9235.50 (−114.06)
S&P Composite 1228.91 (−7.49)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 13738.86 (+336.26)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 10183.13 (−90.64)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index 514.11 (+6.82)

Sydney:
AO 2804.8 (−17.2)

Frankfurt:
DAX 4912.75 (−19.05)

Singapore:
Straits 1476.39 (−29.67)

Brussels:
BEL20 3481.41 (+46.29)

Paris:
CAC-40 3997.06 (+38.34)

Zurich:
SKA Gen 000.00 (+−00.00)

London:
FT 30 3439.3 (−51.8)
FTSE 100 5820.2 (−29.9)
FTSE 250 4872.8 (−1.6)
FTSE 350 2749.0 (−12.1)
FTSE Eurotop 100 2702.26 (−4.57)
FTSE All-Share 2654.52 (−11.19)
FTSE Non Financials 2723.18 (−8.87)
FTSE Fixed Interest 157.50 (+0.22)
FTSE Govt Secs 116.23 (+0.25)
Bargains 82368
SEAQ Volume 1340.2m
US$ 1.6578 (+0.0056)
Euro 0.7059 (−0.0027)
Exchange Index 99.3 (+0.3)
Bank on England official close (4pm)
RPI 164.4 Nov (3.0%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX 162.0 Nov (2.5%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

AIM VCT	100		...
Abbey Natl Dublin Inv	93	+	½
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Cap	96	−	3
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Inc	121½		...
Chariol	117½		...
Collective Assets Trust	117		...
Financial Objects	270	−	6
First Active	319	−	26½
Five Arr Uts Cv Ln 2040	112¼	−	7
Marley B	11		...
Natl Bldg Mtls Cv Pf	105		...
Natural Building Mtls	5		...
Piccadilly Growth Ts	97		...
REXAM B (100)	96		...
Singer & Frd AIM VCT	100		...
Willington	77½		...
Xenova Warrants	16½	+	1½
Yeoman II Equity Units	97		...
Yeoman II Inv Tst Cap	5½	−	½
Yeoman II Inv Tst Inc	92½	+	1
Yeoman II Zero Div Pf	112½	+	¼

RIGHTS ISSUES

EMAP n/p (875)	200	−	15
Recognition Systems n/p (9)	3½	−	2
SKD Media n/p (15)	½	−	¾

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Johnson Fry	133½	+ 19½	+ 17.1
Euro Telecom	166	+ 19½	+ 13.3
Abbot Group	159½	+ 18	+ 12.7
Hall Eng	119	+ 12	+ 11.2
Sears	344½	+ 34	+ 10.9
Nord Anglia	158	+ 15½	+ 10.8
Dixons Grp	1058½	+100½	+ 10.4
Mitel	518	+ 49	+ 10.4
Brent Chems.	112½	+ 10½	+ 10.2
Smith WH	591	+ 54	+ 10.0
Mayflower	137½	+ 10½	+ 8.2
Blagden	143	+ 10½	+ 7.9
BG	409½	+ 29¼	+ 7.6
TeleWest	218	+ 15½	+ 7.6
Flextech	677	+ 46	+ 7.2
Wembley	376	+ 24½	+ 6.9
Logica	596½	+ 34½	+ 6.1

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Marks Spencer	339¾	− 53¾	− 13.6
Liberty Life	809¾	−100	− 10.9
Chiroscience	242½	− 19	− 7.2
Nthn Foods	113½	− 8	− 6.5
Boots	938	− 60½	− 6.0
Jardine Math	184	− 10¾	− 5.5

Sticking the Boots in

THE trouble with Boots is diversification. It is clearly a fine company, especially within its core competence of selling lipstick and Lemsip. Unfortunately, it has a sad history of coming unstuck when it tries to be adventurous. Look at yesterday's Christmas trading statement: in the circumstances and on the whole Boots held up satisfactorily. But disappointments came selling videos, music and giftware. These areas will not prove nearly as troublesome as DIY (the pain of the Do It All write off still lingers) but undermine confidence.

But if Boots is to grow it must learn to diversify more successfully. Boots the Chemist shops more or less saturate the UK. The fact that some new outlets hijacked sales from nearby older stores is testament to the maturity of its coverage. The success of the Advantage loyalty card suggests it is squeezing all it can from this business. Successful diversification relies on effective utilisation of the Boots brand, a fact that the Ward White acquisition failed to recognise but which the company now seems to appreciate.

Boots the Optician has shown the way forward, although sales improvement in the pre-Christmas period seems to have been fired by the extension of the Advantage card remit. Boots the Travel Insurer and Boots the Dentist are next. Then who knows? Boots the Chiropodist? Boots must protect the integrity of the brand but shareholders will welcome a certain (well judged) entrepreneurial fizz.

The shares were hammered yesterday and short-term worries about UK retailing may depress the price in the near future. But the brand and the cash generating ability means investors will be well served in the long term. Hold.

GUS

AFTER all that moaning, you would have thought that Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale had been ripped off good and proper when his company, Great Universal Stores, paid £1.9 billion for Argos after a hostile bid last year.

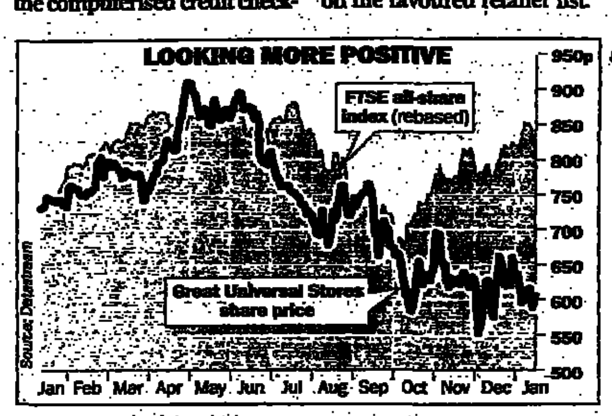
The GUS chairman is still pursuing the old Argos advisers on the charge of giving out misleading information. But the fracas, it seems, had lead investors to the mistaken impression that Argos was suffering badly, post acquisition. With a 2 per cent decline in sales, Argos is not exactly in rude health — but it is in much better shape than some had thought.

There are also signs that GUS is making the most of its new subsidiary. Argos is winning back customers by reducing queues, eliminating stock shortages and addressing the problems that alienated so many customers the Christmas before last.

GUS is also targeting Argos customers with new catalogues spun off from its Kays stable and will soon be selling Argos wares through its established home shopping catalogue channels.

And then there's Experian, the computerised credit checking business that now accounts for a quarter of profits. As Dixons shareholders will tell, a little information technology exposure can do wonders for a retailer's share price.

On a forward multiple of 15 times, the shares look like good value for money. They can join Kingfisher and Next on the favoured retailer list.



Stanley Leisure

STANLEY LEISURE'S good interim profits signal a punters' nightmare. For if Stanley is making money, it means the betting shop regulars are losing it.

Shareholders, naturally, will welcome the strong profit performance, and the 18 per cent rise in the dividend that came with it. But despite the good news Stanley shares are far from being a one-way winning bet. For while profits were well up because the punters bet badly, they can easily disappoint if the fates look more kindly on Stanley's customers. This certainly looks to be the story of the third quarter, when Stanley profit margins have narrowed.

Irregular earnings are a fact of life but the failure of the company to buy Coral, the bookmakers, last year means investors may have to get used to slow or no top-line growth. William Hill is a possible target, but is probably is out of Stanley's price range. Moreover, the casino business is still fairly small, and the relaxation of government regulations has yet to demonstrate that it can fuel growth in the division.

With two new directors on the board who have little experience in the gaming business, investors may justifiably hesitate before buying. Shares currently trade on just over 17 times forecast earnings, slightly above the sector average, and look fully valued.

Britannic

SHARES in Britannic Assurance remain a firm hold after yesterday's good sales figures. They prove that the life insurance and pensions provider is reaping the rewards of retraining its 2,000-strong salesforce in 1997.

Although the company's traditional business in industrial door-to-door selling remains in decline, financial advisers in the branch network are obviously taking thie newly learnt lessons to heart. And with the company diversifying into new areas such as deposits, mortgages and Isas the outlook for new business is more positive still.

On the downside, Britannic's largely low-income customers may feel the pinch of economic slowdown and not save as much. Also, government-inspired obligations to provide cheap pensions could hit margins. But equally, harder times may prompt thrift and volume growth should compensate for thinner pension profit margins.

Dividend growth is stout, thanks to the resolution of its orphan asset position. Added excitement will come from acquisitions. The company is determined to go upmarket and needs exposure to the independent financial adviser network. It lost out on NPI but there are other fish left to fry.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Mar	922-920	May	1042-1039
May	941-940	Jul	unq
Jul	961-960	Sep	—
Sep	980-979	Dec	—
Dec	1005-1003		
Mar	1026-1025		Volume: 11962

ROBUSTA COFFEE

Jan	unq	Sep	1680 SLR
Mar	1760-1758	Nov	1665-1650
May	1704 SLR	Jan	1650 SLR
Jul	unq		Volume: 6087

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	239.9-38.3
Spot: 251.3		Dec	243.9-38.3
Mar	251.0-50.8	Mar	247.9-38.3
May	250.9-50.7	May	250.9-37.2
Aug	246.9-45.8		Volume: 2637

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on January 13

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB	42.05	69.90	90.06
(+/−)	+1.34	−7.68	+0.70
Eng/Wales	42.05	70.53	93.26
(+/−)	+1.34	+8.12	+0.34
%	−15.0	+6.0	−2.0
Scotland	unq	67.33	93.35
(+/−)		+6.64	−1.14
%		−56.0	+11.0

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	10.85	−0.20
Brent 15 day (Mar)	10.95	−0.10
Brent 15 day (Apr)	11.10	−0.10
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)	12.35	−0.20
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	12.45	−0.30

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

	Bid	Offer
Premium Unld	115 (n/c)	117 (−1)
Gasoil EEC	101 (−3)	103 (−3)
3.5 Fuel Oil	62 (−1)	65 (n/c)
Naphtha	101 (n/c)	103 (n/c)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Feb	98.50-98.75	May	103.25-03.75
Mar	99.50-99.75	Jun	105.50-05.75
Apr	101.50-01.75		Vol: 16821

BRENT (6.00pm)

Feb	11.25-11.28	May	11.17-11.20
Mar	10.87-10.90	Jun	11.33-11.37
Apr	11.05 SLR		Vol: 49338

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Jan	74.50	Jan	78.75
Mar	75.35	Mar	80.00
May	77.40	May	81.00
Jul	79.35	Sep	78.25
Sep	78.25	Nov	80.25
Volume: 457		Volume: 25	

LIFFE POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Mar	unq	250.0
Apr	311.0	303.0
May	unq	313.0
		Volume: 108

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)
Feb 52.75-53.25

LIFFE BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

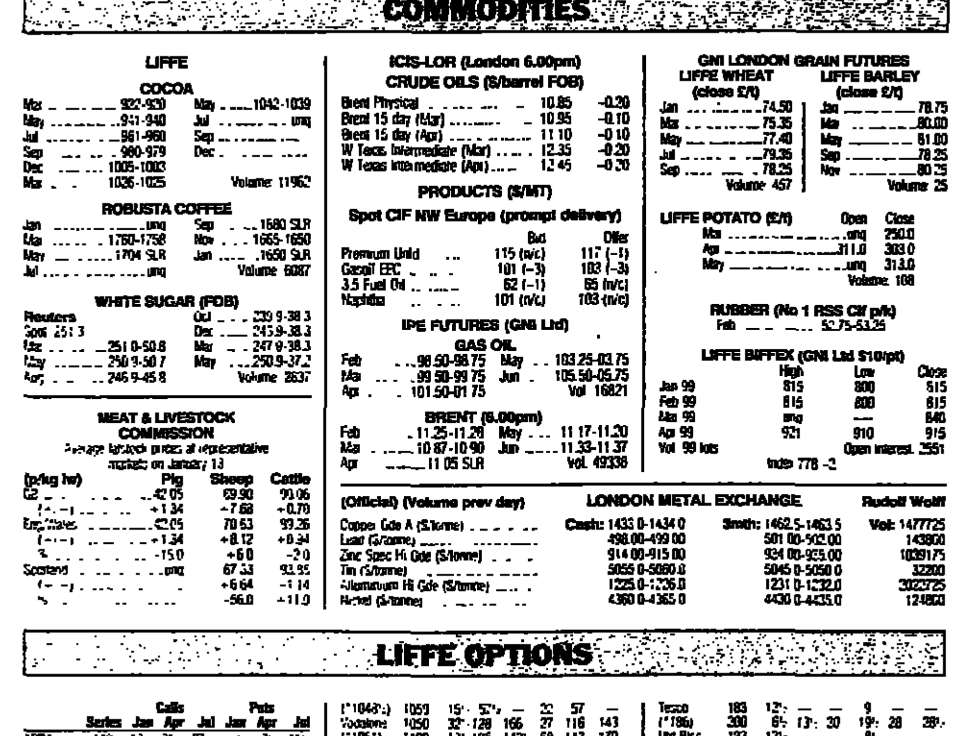
	High	Low	Close
Jan 99	815	800	815
Feb 99	815	800	815
Mar 99	unq	—	840
Apr 99	921	910	915
Vol: 99 lots		Open interest: 2551	

Index: 778 −2

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)	Cash	3mth	Rudolf Wolff Vol
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	1433.0-1434.0	1462.5-1463.5	1477725
Lead ($/tonne)	498.00-499.00	501.00-502.00	143800
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	914.00-915.00	934.00-935.00	1039175
Tin ($/tonne)	5055.0-5060.0	5045.0-5050.0	32200
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1225.0-1226.0	1231.0-1232.0	3023725
Nickel ($/tonne)	4360.0-4365.0	4430.0-4435.0	124800

LIFFE OPTIONS



	Series	Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
ASDA	150	13	21	27		7½	11½
(*152½)	160	1	11½	17½	8½	17½	22
Abbey Nat	1250	20	114	145	19	104½	124½
(*1260½)	1300	9½	90½	123	46½	131½	150½
Alld Dom	450	36	61½	80	1	23	23
(*433)	500	9½	40½	61½	14½	42	53
BAA	700	31½	67	89½	5	33½	51½
(*726½)	750	5½	41½	65	29	58	76½
[illegible]							

	Series	Calls			Puts		
(*1048½)	1050	15½	57½	—	22	57	—
Vodafone	1050	32½	128	166	27	116	143
(*1051)	1100	13½	105	143½	58	143	170
Woolwich	300	25	38	43½	½	11½	17
(*324½)	330	4	22	28	10	25½	31
Zeneca	2600	91½	257	347	44½	192	254
(*2643½)	2700	44½	207	299	97½	241	305
[illegible]							

	Series	Calls			Puts		
Tesco	183	12½	—	—	9	—	—
(*186)	200	6½	13½	30	19½	28	28½
Utd Bisc	193	12½	—	—	8½	—	—
(*195)	216	4½	—	—	23½	—	—

	Series	Calls Jan	May	Aug	Puts Jan	May	Aug
All&Leic	850	18	70	97	16	61½	76½
(*851)	900	3	48½	73	51	91	105½
[illegible]							

January 14 Total: 50617 Calls: 23735 Puts: 27232
January 14 Total: 4426 Calls: 2875 Puts: 1550
*Underlying security price

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt	Mar 99	119.58	119.74	119.07	119.68	44487
Previous open interest 103531	Jun 99				120.68	0
German Govt Bond (Bund)	Mar 99				117.20	0
Previous open interest 0						
Five Year Gilt	Mar 99				108.58	0
Previous open interest 63	Jun 99				108.58	0
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)	Mar 99	114.68	114.87	114.47	114.78	11659
Previous open interest 38039						
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Mar 99	131.35	131.80	131.30	131.80	1639
	Jun 99	130.42	130.42	130.42	130.86	10
Three Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.510	94.530	94.480	94.510	16691
	Jun 99	94.910	94.920	94.860	94.900	27722
Previous open interest 1084657	Sep 99	95.070	95.090	95.030	95.075	25760
Three Mth Euromark	Mar 99	96.940	96.965	96.930	96.960	37443
Previous open interest 2982406	Jun 99	97.100	97.135	97.100	97.130	33233
Three Mth Eurolira	Mar 99	96.940	96.960	96.940	96.960	1614
Previous open interest 491968	Jun 99	97.130	97.130	97.120	97.130	547
Three Mth Euroswiss	Mar 99	98.650	98.710	98.630	98.700	23140
Previous open interest 152140	Jun 99	98.540	98.600	98.520	98.600	7325
Three Mth Euro	Mar 99				96.960	0
Previous open interest 11295	Jun 99				97.130	0
FTSE 100	Mar 99	5895.0	5960.0	5805.0	5832.0	39686
Previous open interest 150479	Jun 99				5872.0	0

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6 Finance House 7
Discount Market Loans: O/night high 6½ Low 5½ Week fixed: 5¾
Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 5¾, 3 mth 5¾; Sell: 2 mth 5⅝, 3 mth 5⅝

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	6-5¾	5⅞-5⅞	5⅞-5⅞	5⅝-5⅝	
Sterling Money Rates:	6-5⅞	5⅞-5¾	5⅞-5⅝	5⅝-5½	5⅝-5½
Interbank:	6-5⅞	5⅞-5¾	5⅞-5¾	5⅝-5½	5½-5½
Overnight: open 5⅞, close 6¼					
Local Authority Deps:	5⅞	n/a	5¾	5⅝	5½
Sterling CDs:	6-5⅞	5⅞-5⅞	5⅞-5¾	5⅝-5⅝	5⅝-5½
Dollar CDs:	4.91	n/a	4.89	4.89	4.98
Building Society CDs:	6⅛-6	5⅞-5¾	5¾-5⅝	5⅝-5⅝	5½-5½

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	4¾-4⅝	5-4⅞	5⅛-4⅞	5-4⅞	5⅛-4¾
Sterling:	6-5⅞	6⅛-6	5⅞-5¾	5¾-5⅝	5⅞-5⅝
Euro:	n/a	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3	3ds-3pr
Yen:	..	1⅛-⅞	1⅛-⅞	1⅛-1⅛	1-par
Canada:		4⅞-4⅞	4⅞-4⅞	4⅞-4⅞	5⅛-4⅞

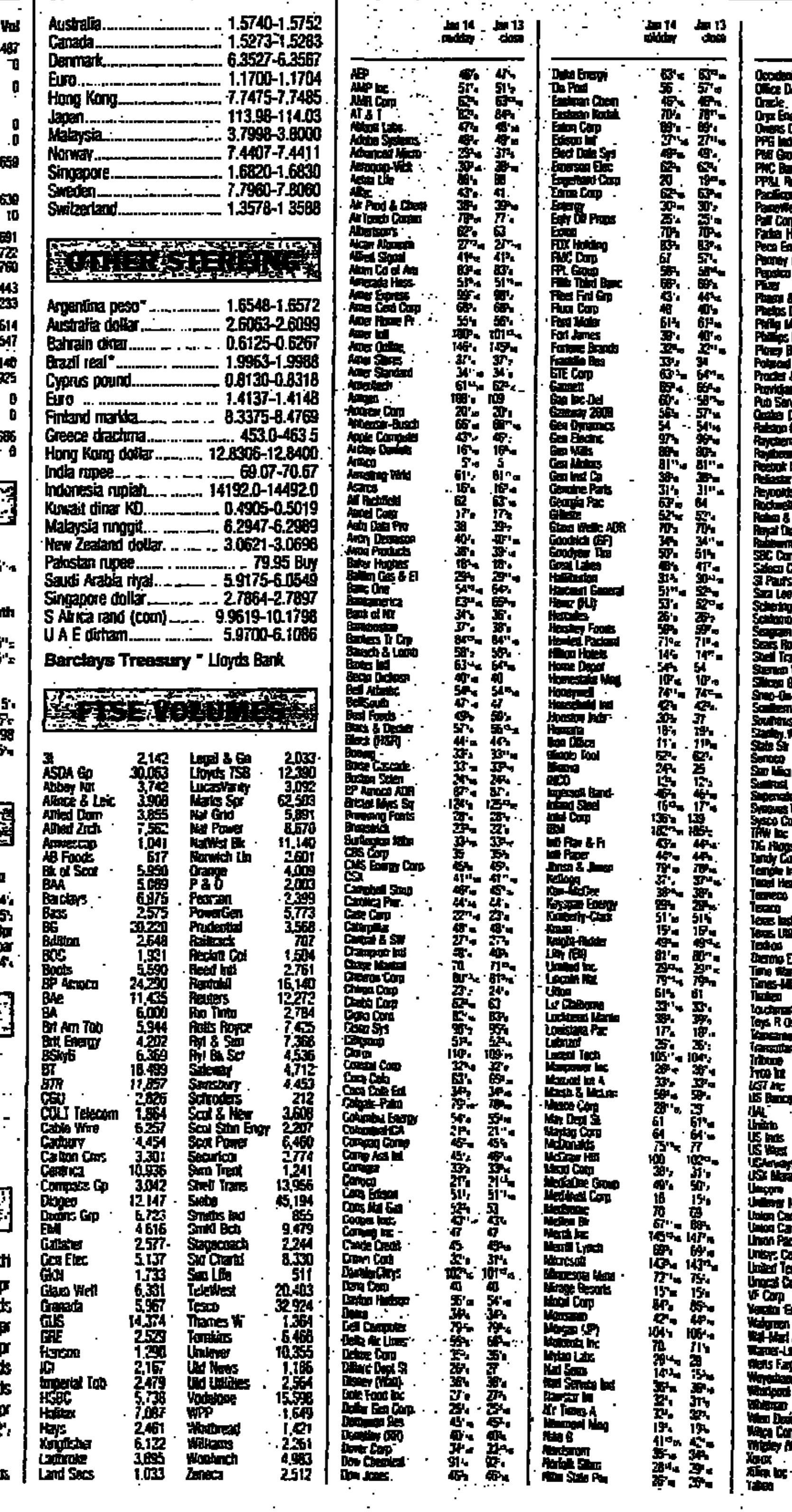
GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open: $286.25-286.55 **Close:** $285.50-286.00 **High:** $286.10-286.60
Low: $285.50-286.00 **AM:** $285.70 **PM:** $285.65
Krugerrand: $286.50-288.50 (£173.00-175.00)
Platinum: $353.50 (£231.30) **Silver:** $5.125 (£3.085) **Palladium:** $312.00 (£188.80)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for January 14	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Copenhagen	10.522-10.553	10.540-10.553	¼-⅛pr	⅝-⅜pr
Euro	1.4162-1.4162	1.4165-1.4178	0.16-0.18ds	0.43-0.47ds
Montreal	2.5075-2.5328	2.5297-2.5325	0.28-0.19pr	0.56-0.42pr
New York	1.6486-1.6585	1.6577-1.6585	0.158-0.137pr	0.328-0.297pr
Oslo	12.311-12.377	12.354-12.374	¼pr-⅛ds	½-⅛ds
Stockholm	12.893-12.966	12.950-12.966	⅜-¼pr	¼pr-⅛ds
Tokyo	187.34-188.92	187.81-188.00	1-¾pr	2⅝-2⅜pr
Zurich	2.2450-2.2584	2.2533-2.2561	1-¾pr	2⅝-2⅜

Source: Extel Premium = pr Discount = ds



DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5740-1.5752
Canada	1.5273-1.5283
Denmark	6.3527-6.3567
Euro	1.1700-1.1704
Hong Kong	7.7475-7.7485
Japan	113.98-114.03
Malaysia	3.7998-3.8000
Norway	7.4407-7.4411
Singapore	1.6820-1.6830
Sweden	7.7960-7.8060
Switzerland	1.3578-1.3588

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6548-1.6572
Australia dollar	2.6063-2.6099
Bahrain dinar	0.6125-0.6267
Brazil real*	1.9963-1.9988
Cyprus pound	0.8130-0.8318
Euro	1.4137-1.4148
Finland markka	8.3375-8.4769
Greece drachma	453.0-463.5
Hong Kong dollar	12.8306-12.8400
India rupee	69.07-70.67
Indonesia rupiah	14192.0-14492.0
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4905-0.5019
Malaysia ringgit	6.2947-6.2989
New Zealand dollar	3.0621-3.0698
Pakistan rupee	79.95 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.9175-6.0549
Singapore dollar	2.7864-2.7897
S Africa rand (com)	9.9619-10.1798
U A E dirham	5.9700-6.1086

Barclays Treasury * Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	2,142	Legal & Gn	2,033
ASDA Gp	30,063	Lloyds TSB	12,390
Abbey Ntl	3,742	LucasVarity	3,092
Allnce & Leic	3,908	Marks Spr	62,503
Allied Dom	3,855	Nat Grid	5,891
Allied Zrch	7,562	Nat Power	8,670
Amvescap	1,041	NatWest Bk	11,140
AB Foods	617	Norwich Un	2,601
Bk of Scot	5,950	Orange	4,009
BAA	5,089	P & O	2,003
Barclays	6,875	Pearson	2,399
Bass	2,575	PowerGen	5,773
BG	30,220	Prudential	3,568
Billiton	2,648	Railtrack	707
BOC	1,931	Reckitt Col	1,504
Boots	5,590	Reed Intl	2,761
BP Amoco	24,290	Rentokil	16,140
BAe	11,435	Reuters	12,272
BA	6,000	Rio Tinto	2,784
Brit Am Tob	5,944	Rolls Royce	7,425
Brit Energy	4,202	Ryl & Sun	7,368
BSkyB	6,369	Ryl Bk Scot	4,536
BT	18,499	Safeway	4,712
BTR	11,857	Sainsbury	4,453
CGU	2,826	Schroders	212
COLT Telecom	1,864	Scot & New	3,608
Cable Wire	6,257	Scot Sthn Engy	2,207
Cadbury	4,454	Scot Power	6,460
Carlton Cms	3,301	Securicor	2,774
Centrica	10,936	Sevrn Trent	1,241
Compass Gp	3,042	Shell Trans	13,956
Diageo	12,147	Siebe	45,194
Dixons Grp	6,723	Smiths Ind	855
EMI	4,616	SmKl Bch	9,479
Gallaher	2,577	Stagecoach	2,244
Gen Elec	5,137	Std Chartd	8,330
GKN	1,733	Sun Life	511
Glaxo Well	6,331	TeleWest	20,403
Granada	5,967	Tesco	32,924
GUS	14,374	Thames W	1,364
GRE	2,529	Tomkins	6,468
Hanson	1,298	Unilever	10,355
ICI	2,167	Utd News	1,186
Imperial Tob	2,479	Utd Utilities	2,564
HSBC	5,738	Vodafone	15,598
Halifax	7,087	WPP	1,649
Hays	2,461	Whitbread	1,421
Kingfisher	6,122	Williams	2,261
Ladbroke	3,895	Woolwich	4,983
Land Secs	1,033	Zeneca	2,512

US STOCKS

	Jan 14 midday	Jan 13 close		Jan 14 midday	Jan 13 close		Jan 14 midday	Jan 13 close
AEP	46⅞	47⅛	Duke Energy	63⅛	63⅞	Occidental Pet	17	17⅛
AMP Inc	51⅞	51½	Du Pont	56	57⅛	Office Depot	34⅛	34⅛
AMR Corp	62⅞	63⅞	Eastman Chem	46⅞	46⅞	Oracle	44⅞	45⅛
AT & T	82⅞	84⅞	Eastman Kodak	70⅞	78⅞	Oryx Energy Co	13⅞	13⅞
Abbott Labs	47⅞	48⅛	Eaton Corp	69⅛	69⅛	Owens Corning	35⅛	3[illegible]
Adobe Systems	49⅞	49⅛	Edison Intl	27⅞	27⅞	PPG Industries	58⅞	[illegible]
[illegible]								

Kilfoyle takes regulatory challenge

ALASDAIR MURRAY

Peter Kilfoyle is an unlikely candidate to take charge of the ultra-dry area of government regulation. The Minister for Public Services is anything but dry, a garrulous Liverpudlian fond of making self-deprecating remarks about his substantial figure. A Beatles fanatic, Mr Kilfoyle makes people feel at ease, and is as keen to chat about family matters as the intricacies of Cabinet Office policy.

The jovial exterior, however, hides a tough grounding in grass-roots politics in Liverpool during the 1980s, when Militant ruled the roost. A book is promised detailing an internal party split that makes today's Cabinet battles seem no more than a playground punch-up.

For the moment, Mr Kilfoyle has the important task of fleshing out the Government's approach to regulation, one of the few areas of policy where the elusive "Third Way" can be see in action. Although it has persevered with much of the deregulation machinery established by the previous Government, it insists its ambition is to pursue a world of "better regulation" not deregulation. The phrase allows it to combine its new-found free market zeal — the Treasury loves to talk in terms of the dangers regulation poses to productivity — with some more traditional interventionist instincts. The promised creation of a Food Standards Agency, for instance, has been sold as "better" not less red tape.

The verbal gymnastics should not obscure a number of important initiatives. There is the Better Regulation task force, chaired by Lord Haskins, head of Northern Foods, which reports directly to the Prime Minister on a broad range of regulatory issues. Mr Kilfoyle, meanwhile, chairs the Access Business Group, which includes representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry; the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions; local government and the Better Regulation task force. It is charged with exploring ways that the Government can improve its approach to regulation.

Two important initiatives have emerged from this group, which is likely to see its role expanded in the forthcoming Modernising Government White Paper. Earlier this week, the Cabinet Office announced the creation of an "Infoshop" designed to offer "one-stop" advice on a broad spectrum of regulatory measures, from planning permission to health and safety requirements. This development is of particular importance to small businesses, which have always been at a competitive disadvantage because they cannot afford the lawyers and advisers necessary to ensure full regulatory compliance.

The Access Business Group has also established the "enforcement concordat", a voluntary best practice code designed to encourage a more consistent approach to regulatory enforcement. Underpinning these practical improvements is the Regulatory Impact Assessment, a requirement that all legislation must be tested for its effect on business. Mr Kilfoyle describes his role as the Government's "gatekeeper", ensuring that shoddy and counter-productive new regulations are not unwittingly released on the business sector.

For all the good intent, however, it is difficult to see how these principles have been translated into practical reality in the Government's own legislative timetable. Arguably the biggest regulatory change for business in the last year has been the introduction of Working Time Directive. Yet the Government seems to have failed to meet any of its commitments to improve the quality of new regulation. The directive has been criticised for its opaque wording, convoluted compliance procedures and the lack of preparation time granted to business.

Two other long-promised regulatory initiatives, which seem to encompass the two sides of the Government's "better regulation" concept, have also failed to materialise. It has floated the populist idea of abolishing the red tape surrounding the anachronistic drink laws in England and Wales. Yet, despite winning the support of the police, as well as the drinks and leisure industry, the Government seems to have decided it has insufficient Parliamentary time to press ahead with the legislation.

The Food Standards Agency, a long-standing manifesto commitment that represents the flip-side of the "better regulation" idea, has also fallen victim to other Parliamentary commitments. A draft consultation paper is promised for next month but the suspicion remains that the Government is having trouble reconciling the complexities of streamlining the existing regulations into one organisation, as well as swallowing the estimated £100 million start-up costs.

Not that Mr Kilfoyle deserves to take the blame for these failings. His message of a considered approach to new legislation needs to become gospel across a Government as prone as any to draft new regulation poorly. It will take all of Mr Kilfoyle's Scouse steel and charm to prevent the good intentions becoming crushed under the remorseless wheels of the Government's legislative machinery.

Comeuppance for Cassandras as euro survives initiation test

Sigrid Aufterbeck and **Richard Miles** saw little alarm at advent of currency

So the world did not come to an end on January 4. After all the hollering and hullabaloo about the euro's introduction, the only blot on the new currency's birth was a pie in the face for Gerrit Zalm, the Dutch Finance Minister. While the rest of Europe was chilling champagne, poor Mr Zalm was wiping the custard from his eyes after the anti-euro protest group TAART caught him off-guard.

That the ritual flanning of a finance minister was the highlight of this historic day shows just how uneventful it was. The Cassandras had been proven wrong: months of painstaking preparations by bankers paid off as trading in the new currency began without a big hitch. The Bank of England, having expected at least a few minor tremors in the City, was surprised by the success of the transition.

Even settlement of the transactions — seen as the crucial test of the euro — went swimmingly, aside from a few problems with Target, the clearing system for high net-worth transactions in the euro. Bankers were united in identifying this as the single biggest problem. Dealers complained that they had no contemporary view on their risk positions in the money markets because Target failed to provide this information.

The first chance for dealers to assess position does not come until 5pm at the earliest, sparking off a flurry of transactions as money desks attempt to balance their accounts. Werner Becker, a senior economist at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, said: "This suddenly causes a lot of transactions in the evening (Target closes at 7pm, continental time) and the system has not enough capacity to deal with them."

City of London dealers complained that some of their transactions were not being cleared by Target because of logjams in other countries. Differing system standards in some European nations led to the rejection of certain payments, a problem which has now been solved. The trading hours for Target have also been extended in Germany, to ensure the same closing time in all countries.

Double-booking of payments also occured at some banks whose systems were not equipped to handle the transition from 11 currencies to one. But a money trader at Westdeutsche Landesbank in Düsseldorf, said: "Such double-bookings are nothing unusual during the end-of-year crowd. It certainly wasn't anything to worry about."

Along the way there have been a few symbolic victories for the Europhiles, and some black days for the little Englanders. Libor, for decades the benchmark interest rate used to underpin many financial contracts, has been supplanted by Euribor, its European equivalent. Liffe, London's international futures and options exchange, this week accepted Euribor as the new standard.

NatWest, too, made a patriotic stand for sterling against the euro, which has ousted the pound as one of the world's three reserve currencies. While other banks were quoting the euro against sterling, NatWest persevered in putting sterling first, until the market made it clear that one convention in the market was necessary to avoid confusion.

The economic impact of the euro was, arguably, also a non-event. The birth of the new currency was somewhat overshadowed by the tensions between the US dollar and the Japanese yen. Fears about the US balance of payments caused the dollar to fall against the yen, indirectly benefitting the euro. As George Magnus, chief economist of Warburg Dillon Read, remarked, the euro had not been born strong, but had gained from the weakness of other currencies.

Equities, however, ushered in the euro with steady gains, as bourses across the Continent celebrated the smooth transition. The benchmark Dow Jones Euro STOXX 50 index of 50 euroland blue chips jumped 6 per cent on the first day of trading. Only London did not share in the joy, with the FTSE 100 closing down 3.2 per cent. The "ins" had a better day than the "outs".



Gerrit Zalm, the Dutch Finance Minister, receiving an overt anti-euro message last week

The humble gains of January 4 have since been overshadowed by the crisis in Brazil. Effective devaluation of the real has helped wipe billions off stock markets across the globe, as banks once again fear that the world economy could tip over into recession. If one thing is for sure, then the introduction of the euro has done nothing to eliminate the rampant volalitity in equity markets.

The irony is that most of the change has been virtually invisible to both corporate customers and consumers, particularly in the UK. Coins and notes will not be introduced until 2002, and although some retailers are already accepting euros at the till — Marks & Spencer included — the advent of the euro has yet to make its impact on Jean-Pierre or Hans-Otto when they are out shopping. Many British businesses have said they cannot find customers in Europe who want to deal in euros and there has been a much lower take-up of euro accounts than had been expected. Indeed, banks still seem to be clinging on to the old ways. There have been complaints that banks are still charging excessive commissions to change your escudos notes into lire when, in effect, they are the same currency and the bank has no exchange-rate risk.

Of course, there were one or two funny hitches. In Germany, savers with local banks rushed out to get their first balance statement in euros only to find that demand was so strong that the printers ran out of paper. Matters were not helped by the fact that this occurred over the holiday weekend, and the machines had not been refilled.

Users of online banking systems also encountered problems. At the German Postbank, demand on the network was so great that many customers could not gain access to their accounts. "But once the problems of the long weekend were sorted out, the systems ran perfectly," said a spokesman for Postbank.

There have also been benefits for consumers, particularly those who shop in different countries. Some credit card issuers, including Barclaycard, now waive conversion fees if the customer uses the card within euroland. Germans shopping in France, for example, would now save between 1 and 2 per cent on transaction costs when using their credit card.

Indeed, the birth of the euro has been so successful that some politicians have called for the introduction of coins and notes to be brought forward. Elio Di Rupo, the Belgian economics minister, has suggested that the three years until 2002 might be too long a period and has attempted to convince his EU colleagues to speed up the process.

Practical problems, however, make this highly unlikely. While it might be possible to print sufficient notes within a shorter period by running the presses night and day, minting new coinage will take considerably longer. Hans Tietmeyer, President of the Bundesbank, has said Europe needs the time to follow sound monetary policies to avoid conflict between the 11 "in" countries.

The glitch-free introduction of the euro has no doubt persuaded some sceptics of monetary union that such a scheme can work. But given the charges of fraud levelled against European commissioners, and a growing disenchantment with Brussels, it is unlikely to be enough to convince British cynics that the euro is the best thing since sliced bread.

Barclay's son also rises and remains in the shade

In the 1980s there was a game played by jobbers (those beasts now known as market-makers) on the floor of the Stock Exchange. If they wanted to ramp a share, they would start a bid rumour. And if they could not think of a credible bidder they would say the company was being stalked by the Barclay Brothers. The duo's name was used because they were so secretive, they could be relied upon not to spoil the fun by admitting whether or not they were interested.

A dozen years on, little has changed. The stock market is abuzz with bid rumours and Frederick and David Barclay are still wealthy, acquisitive and secretive. But the public face of their empire has a new look: now it is David's 42-year-old son, Aidan, who is often in front, although he is hardly more forthcoming than his father and uncle.

It is Aidan who is the chairman of January Investments, the bid vehicle put together by Phillip Green, with backing from the Barclay family, to bid for Sears. It is Aidan who made the application for a licence to run a casino in the basement of the Ritz Hotel in Picadilly, Central London, a hotel that his father and uncle own. It is Aidan, in his position as chairman of European Press Holdings, who first put *The European* up for sale and, when no acceptable bidder could be found, closed the weekly paper down just before Christmas. Aidan is a director of the Barclay companies that publish *The Scotsman*, *Scotland on Sunday* and *Sunday Business*, as well as Automotive and Financial Group, the financing business that the Barclays bought from Octav Botnar for £200 million after the Nissan UK chief fled to Switzerland.

The Barclays were thought to be stalking Thorn, the TV rental group, before Nomura bought it last autumn. Any bid would almost certainly have been fronted by Aidan. He is turning into quite a tycoon, ableit one bankrolled by his uncle and father.

Aidan — married to Fizzy, daughter of Sirdar Ali Aziz, the export financier — has enjoyed a privileged life. His mother — formerly Zoe Newton — was one of Britain's top models. From 1954, a year before her engagement to David Barclay, to 1959, when she quit modelling, she was the Kate Moss of her day. The National Dairy Council chose her to front its "drink milk" campaign. Aidan grew up in Kensington and Monte Carlo. He has holidayed at Brechou, the 160-acre island in the Channel Islands where the Barclays built a castle. He has sailed on his father's yacht.

By the time Aidan was born the brothers were on their way to their first million. They were born in 1934, David ten minutes before Frederick, sons of a Scottish bakery products salesman who died when they were 12. They grew up in Sinclair Road, Shepherds Bush. It is now quite trendy, having been colonised by BBC media folk, but in those days tradesmen rubbed shoulders with the odd "old tom" — prostitutes who serviced soldiers on leave.

The Barclays started their careers at the accounts department of General Electric, but soon left to become estate agents. In the early 1960s they started investing in property, initially in West London and unpromising suburbs, such as Isleworth. However, by the end of the 1960s they had moved into hotels, buying the swanky Londonderry in Park Lane.

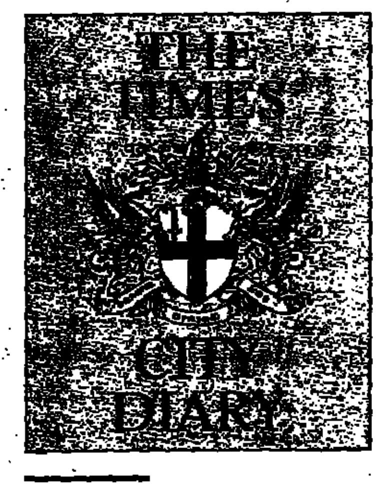
Despite the property crash of 1974 denting their burgeoning empire, they survived to build up a hotels and shipping business. With the exception of The Ritz and The Howard, on London's Embankment, the Barclays are largely out of hotels now. The shipping line, Gotaas-Larsen, was sold for £465 million last year.

Though their wealth is said to be in excess of £500 million, the brothers are so secretive that numerous attempts to find out the true extent of their interests have ended up in failure and litigation. One of the few things known about them is that they love ballroom dancing, and Frederick's stepson, Ko Asada Barclay, runs a record label called Two-to-Tango, which specialises in ballroom tunes.

The Barclay family's wealth has given this bid for Sears credibility. Only a few weeks ago, institutions were deriding Phillip Green's approach, saying he could not raise the money. When Phillips & Drew learnt that the Barclay Brothers were behind the bid, their attitude changed from dismissive to supportive.

Lord Tebbit, a non-executive director of Sears, must know how influential the Barclays are. After all, he would have seen David and Frederick when they all attended the 70th birthday party of a certain Baroness Thatcher.

JASON NISSÉ



Rat trap

ROBERT NAPIER, former chief executive of Redland, has run into a peculiar conflict of interest in his new job. He has just been made chief executive of WWF-UK, a set of ugly initials that masks the British branch of what used to be called the World Wildlife Fund.

This means he has had to relinquish his non-executive directorship of Rentokil Initial. But the WWF is keen that Napier continues as a non-exec at United Biscuits, this company having been deemed by the WWF marginally less likely to slaughter rare wild animals, I must assume.

Rentokil at first thought that Napier had to give up all his directorships to devote all his time to the new job, but this is not so. A WWF spokesman tells me: "He's obviously aware of sensitivities around and some of the perceptions there might be about that company."

The Rentokil people point, in vain, to their excellent work in providing tropical plants, medical services, hygiene and goodness knows what else. Alas, once a rat-catcher, always a rat-catcher, it seems.



"I'm a shareholder — could you exchange me for someone else?"

THIS is the tragic tale of the unnamed businessman in the Ukraine who decided to buy all 50 of his staff a pager as a new year present. According to the local paper, he was driving back from the shop with his gifts in the back when all 50 went off simultaneously.

The man was so alarmed that he let go of the steering wheel and the car ploughed into a lamppost. Once he had recovered from the impact, he looked at the message on the pagers. All 50 read: "Congratulations on a successful purchase." As the saying goes, it would take a heart of stone not to laugh.

Cuba libra

FIRSTGROUP, the bus operator engaged in a vicious battle with Brian Souter's Stagecoach in Glasgow, has won ethical brownie points by diverting a fleet of ten of that city's superannuated buses from the scrapyard to Cuba. They are being donated free, loaded up with medical supplies and well-equipped with new tyres to keep a local hospital going.

The existing transport fleet of the Ambrosia Grillo Hospital up in the mountains has given up the ghost, and the new/old buses will instead allow doctors and nurses to commute. And there will be a small corner of the Sierra Maestra that will be forever Sauchiehall Street.

Euro treat

I HEAR of an outburst of generosity at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. The US investment bank is paying a euro bonus to those staff who worked over the new year to prepare for the single currency.

This will make up at least in part for last year's bonuses, which were severely pruned. Morgan Stanley cannot confirm this, but I have it on good authority from one of their employees. Perhaps other City banks who so presumed on their staff's goodwill might care to follow suit.

A CITY chum rings with an odd question. What are we going to call the first decade of the new millennium? You know, as in the Twenties, the Nineties and so on? We have less than a year to decide. Any thoughts?

Animal magic

WONDERFUL news. The Heathrow 19, plus guinea pig, are safe. Regular readers will know of the 19 hamsters, plus guinea pig, now at a Corporation of London holding pound near Heathrow after their owner admitted animal cruelty charges last week.

They were to meet their maker this weekend under the quarantine laws, but an organisation called Rodent Rescue UK of Royston, Hertfordshire, has stepped in. "I don't think they ever turn any animals away," said my Corporation source. "We only have to make sure they have the facilities to provide quarantine for six months."

Makes you proud to live in a country that can support an organisation like Rodent Rescue of Royston, doesn't it? To mark the occasion I sent one of my best photographers to infiltrate their current home and take a picture of the guinea pig, who has become a sort of unofficial leader of the group.

What do you mean, you don't believe it's him? Can you tell one guinea pig from another?

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk



Great escape: the guinea pig saved by Rodent Rescue

Equities lose early lead

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
646	385	Allied Domecq	495	- 2	5.1	19.0
412½	291½	Bulmer (HP)	308½	- 5½	4.1	13.6
42½	7	Burn Stewart	14½	- ¼	...	...
795	432	Diageo	698	+ 1½	3.0	20.2
930	675	Glenmorangie A	680	...	2.7	18.5
325	235	Highland Distil	262½	- 1½	4.5	12.0
244	115	Matthew Clark	242	...	6.7	8.2
39½	18½	[illegible] W	28½	...	...	...
2021½	725	SA Breweries	934½	...	3.9	14.6

BANKS

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1618¾	893¾	ABN-AMRO	1225	- 16½	3.3	14.4
1390	860	Abbey Natl	1258	- 6	3.2	18.6
2032	585	Alliance & Leic	850½	+ 4½	3.3	15.0
1232½	587½	Allied Irish	1151	+ 47	1.7	32.1
458¾	289¾	Aus Nz Z	390¾	- 8	5.1	...
6075	3237½	Bank America	3818¾	- 231¼	...	...
813	491	Bank Scotland	741½	+ 2½	1.8	18.8
1995	827	Barclays	1312	- 10	3.7	12.0
1487½	882½	Bk of Ireland	1310½	+ 20½	2.1	21.6
2484¾	1585¾	Commerzbk	1787½	- 31¼	3.1	...
543¾	218¾	Dai Ichi Kan Y	337½	+ 3½	1.3	...
5369¾	3278¾	Deutsche Bk	3278¾	- 268¾	2.0	...
1306¾	1134¾	Espirito Santo	1181¼	...	3.2	...
531	112½	Fuji Bank Y	241¼	- 1½	1.9	...
2073	980	HSBC	1631	+ 3	4.0	14.9
2002	937	HSBC HK	1325	...	4.2	14.0
1000	648½	Halifax	805½	+ 21	3.5	22.1

[illegible]

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

[illegible]

BUILDING MATERIALS

[illegible]

CHEMICALS

[illegible]

CONSTRUCTION

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DISTRIBUTORS

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DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

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ELECTRICITY

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ELECTRONIC & ELECT

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ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

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HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

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INSURANCE

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LEISURE & HOTELS

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MEDIA

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MINING

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OIL & GAS

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OTHER FINANCIAL

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PHARMACEUTICALS

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PRINTING & PAPER

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PROPERTY

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RETAILERS, FOOD

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RETAILERS, GENERAL

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SUPPORT SERVICES

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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TRANSPORT

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WATER

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ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

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[illegible]

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

[illegible]

LONGS (over 15 years)

[illegible]

UNDATED

[illegible]

INDEX-LINKED

[illegible]

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 378 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7000				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	142.60	151.96	- 0.34	..
-do- NAV to Jun 19	135.00	135.00		
UK Equity Safeguard	115.62	123.65	+ 4.05	2.02
-do- NAV to Mar 79	110.98	110.98	....	...
US Eqy Safeguard	95.13	101.18	- 0.72	
Cash	958.90	963.70		6.25
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	422.51	447.66	- 5.31	1.80
UK Small Cos	82.23	87.94	- 0.86	0.50
FTSE 250 Index	98.28	105.11	- 1.71	1.89
Geared UK Index	#23.332	#24.630	- 0.21	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	88.10	91.10	+ 0.21	6.60
Monthly Inc	43.81	46.85†	- 0.53	7.98
International Funds				
American Gen	373.24	395.00	- 4.51	0.17
American Smll	179.40	191.37	- 1.36	..
JG US Index	#28.559	#30.889	- 0.61	4.50
European Gen	448.56	474.79	- 0.85	...
European Smll	197.06	211.27	- 2.36	
Japan Gen	105.29	111.07	- 1.31	
Asia Pacific	63.26	67.56	- 0.02	1.08
Pacific Smll	86.63	92.65	- 0.11	
Greater China	152.00	162.66	- 7.56	
Latin America	48.50	51.84	- 4.08	..
Int Growth	191.68	204.91	- 0.40	0.11
Balanced Exempt	188.84	195.69		2.18
Global Strategy	45.54	48.70	- 0.02	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01203 553 231				
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trst				
Balanced Acc	81.75	86.97	- 0.95	1.75
Balanced Inc	73.44	78.13	- 0.85	1.75
Brit Excell	128.20	138.40	+ 1.20	2.33
Bul Fxdmts Acc	163.20	173.60	- 1.70	4.09
Bul Fxdmts Inc	101.20	107.70	+ 1.10	4.09
Europe	574.30	610.90	+17.10	0.30
General Acc	943.10	1003.00	+18.20	2.54
General Inc	754.90	803.10	+14.90	2.54
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	272.30	287.50	- 0.80	5.07
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	108.10	114.10	- 0.30	5.07
Global Opps	132.40	140.90	- 1.40	0.27
Higher Inc Acc #	1182.00	1257.00	- 1.00	4.44

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
CANADA LIFE MGMT (UK) LTD				
01707 822 100				
Can Gen Dis	309.40	326.00	+ 1.10	1.02
-do- Income Dist	168.30	178.40	- 0.30	2.77
-do- Accum	579.50	614.20	- 1.30	2.77
Gilt & Fxd Int	49.35	51.83	- 0.07	3.80
Growth Units	369.20	384.30	+ 1.20	1.19
Bond	209.50	220.80		4.50
Intl Growth	272.20	289.30	- 1.10	0.11
North American	413.20	439.40	- 5.00	...
Far East	177.70	190.00	- 3.30	0.91
UK Smaller Cos	253.40	271.00	- 2.10	1.25
European	141.50	150.40	+ 0.70	0.14
Japanese Growth	28.49	30.18	+ 0.11	..
High Income	294.40	314.80	- 0.30	2.79
CAPEL-CURE MYERS UT MGMT LTD				
0161 831 7433 Enq 0161 831 7433 Dlg 0161 831 7456				
American & Gen	350.80	379.30	- 0.20	.
European Inc	152.40	162.00	- 0.88	
Smaller Cos (4-1)	104.20	110.80	- 1.00	2.36
Growth	735.80	782.80	+ 2.30	1.22
Income & Growth #	579.10	616.10	+ 3.00	4.42
-do- Accum #	941.90	1002.10	+ 4.80	4.42
Japan & Gen	49.32	52.12	- 0.44	
Hallmark Gwth	1715.00	1787.00†	+10.00	0.90
-do- Accum	2183.00	2275.00	+13.00	0.90
Special Sits	169.10	179.80†	+ 1.00	1.22
High Yield	1886.00	1924.00	+18.00	3.87
CAZENOVE UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
0171 606 0708				
Cazenove Portfolio	124.35	132.29		1.99
American Portfolio	201.59	213.54		0.22
European Portfolio	218.84	232.41		0.22
High Income	60.14	63.53		5.68
Japanese Portfolio	46.11	48.82		
Pacific Portfolio	105.58	113.53		1.78
UK Equity	122.61	130.88	..	1.82
UK Equity & Bd	72.03	76.35		5.11
UK Smlr Cos	49.18	52.60	.	2.27
CBF CHURCH OF ENGLAND FUNDS				
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Inv Fd Inc	1075.50	1091.85	+23.92	3.19
Inv Fd Acc	1150.53	1167.91	+25.96	

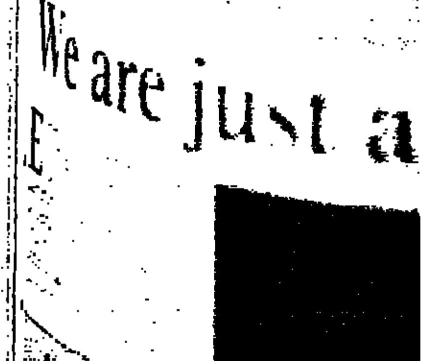
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Ecology	125.23	133.21	+ 1.19	0.27
European	307.57	327.10	+ 4.91	0.19
Far Eastern	283.80	301.80	+ 0.70	..
UK Special Sits	68.50	73.06	+ 0.54	0.27
Fd of Inv Tsts	58.44	62.32	+ 0.64	
High Income #	66.50	70.92	+ 0.45	4.23
Financial Opps	76.88	81.78	+ 0.52	0.75
Growth & Income #	56.30	59.94	+ 0.86	2.17
Global Opps	56.32	59.88	+ 0.44	0.75
LAURENCE KEEN UNIT TRUST MGMT				
0171 558 8800				
Bridge Income #	410.09	436.27	+ 2.24	4.55
Esk Growth	145.78	155.08		0.58
Inc & Growth	100.59	107.01†	+ 1.88	1.73

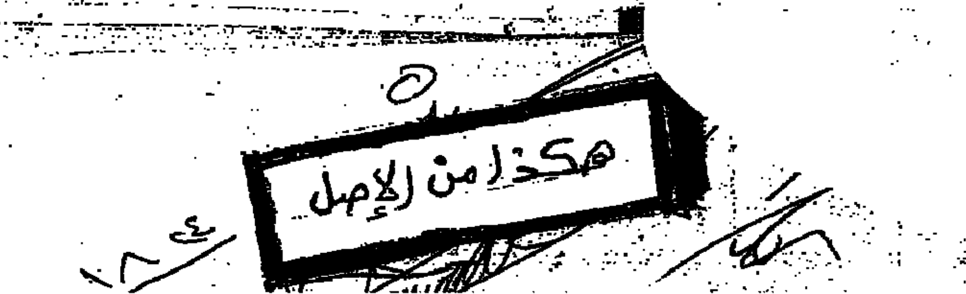
	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
-do- Accum	98.18	103.70†	+ 1.00	3.06
Smaller Cos	65.70	69.50	- 0.30	2.13
-do- Accum	142.68	150.88	- 0.80	2.13
Sth East Asia	231.20	244.50	- 1.60	1.78
-do- Accum	319.50	337.90	- 2.20	1.78
UK Equity #	80.70	85.30†	+ 1.20	4.14
-do- Accum #	238.40	252.20†	+ 3.70	4.14
UK Growth	1544.30	1633.10	+20.30	1.47
-do- Accum	1770.50	1872.30	+23.30	1.47
MGM UNIT MANAGERS LTD				
Dealing: 01277 261 610 Enq: 01903 204 631				
European Growth	175.12	186.29	+ 1.87	0.29

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Smaller Cos	108.73	115.67	- 0.07	1.69
Ever Spec Sit Inc	56.08	59.66	- 0.08	2.44
Ever Spec Sit Acc	60.48	64.34	- 0.07	2.44
Pensions Growth	52.21	55.54	- 1.10	1.58
LAZARD UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
Dealing: 0870 6066408				
UK Cap	582.20	617.70	- 0.30	1.37
UK Inc/Gth #	620.80	656.40	+ 3.18	3.28
UK Income #	417.10	441.40	- 0.43	4.45
UK Income Acc #	437.00	462.10	+ 0.37	4.45
UK Smr Cos	307.10	327.10	- 0.30	2.17
Euro Gwth	259.70	274.60†	+ 0.80	0.25
N Amer Gwth	182.90	193.30	- 0.70	
Pacific Growth	6.90	6.33†	- 0.24	0.38
Emg Mkts Gwth	47.52	50.41†	- 3.23	...

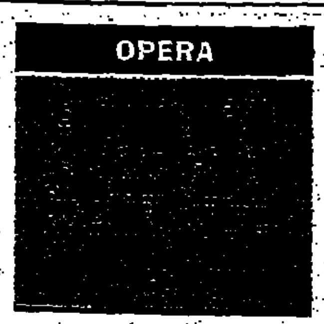
	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Intl Bond	66.03	70.24	- 0.14	2.81
Intl Equity Growth	114.67	121.77	+ 0.31	0.33
N Amer Growth	218.18	231.34	- 1.61	0.12
Special Sits Growth	38.75	41.22	- 0.18	1.33
UK Growth	638.30	666.10	- 2.34	1.71
-do- Accum	919.40	978.08	- 3.37	1.71
MW JOINT INVESTORS LTD				
01620 825867				
Balanced Fd #	1588.40	1611.70†	..	2.88
Income #	1312.10	1333.90†	.	3.80
MALDON UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0131 222 4242				
Maldon General	197.00	202.00†	- 0.28	3



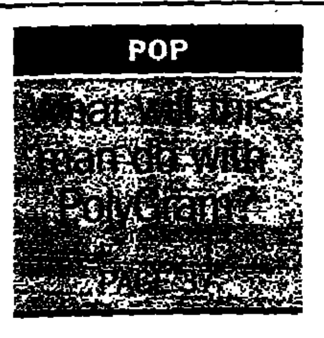






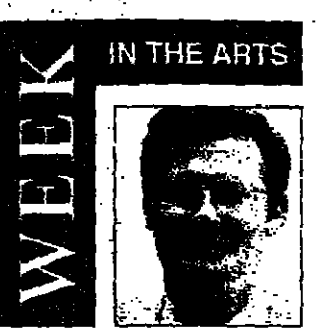


THE TIMES ARTS





Put some fire in the belly of an architect



RICHARD MORRISON

This week 27,000 voting slips went out to 27,000 architects. Their deliberations won't exactly be rushed; they have six weeks to rank three names in order of preference. Rome wasn't built in a day, and clearly the pace of architectural thought hasn't quickened much in 22 centuries. But by March we will know who is to be the new President of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Should we care? Readers, the startling answer is yes. No art form matters more than architecture. Glorious or gormless, we have to live with it, and in it. We should be passionate about it, and at one level — the level at which steam shoots out of ears and foam drips from horror-stricken jaws — we are. Everyone in Glasgow has an opinion on Foster's "armadillo" Conference Centre, just as everyone in Bilbao has views on Gehry's armour-plated Guggenheim, everyone in Paris offers a *mot juste* about Perrault's towering Bibliothèque de France, and every taxi driver in South Ken will tell you exactly where Daniel Libeskind can stuff his V&A "Spiral", even though it exists so far only as a figment of a computer's imagination.

In that sense architecture is the new rock 'n' roll. These bravura edifices are more than buildings. They are showbiz gestures. They penetrate popular consciousness as a top-selling rock album does. And even people who couldn't tell you the difference between a flying buttress and a flying saucer can name some of the drawing-board superstars who created them.

Besides which, top architects are so ubiquitous now. That is partly because of the lottery, which has been like Christmas every day for some favoured architects. But there is another reason. Not content with designing buildings, architects now seem intent on organising the gaps in between. From the teeming offices of Foster or Rogers regularly come grand plans for pedestrianising cities or reclaiming "brownfield" sites. And thank goodness for that, many would say. Especially in London — a great metropolis in civic disarray and logistical chaos — top architects have become mouthpieces of the urban conscience.

All of which adds up to many reasons why we should care about architecture and about who runs its most venerable institution, the 165-year-old RIBA. But this is a strange public debate, because the public is starved of both knowledge and power. Whether through arrogance or impatience, architects always seem reluctant to explain themselves to laymen, or evangelise for their craft. Yet they complain bitterly when (as often happens) their grand visions are mauled by "visually illiterate" planning officers or councillors, or trashed in the press. True, the fury over the concrete brutalism of the 1960s has abated in the 15 years since the Prince of Wales made his "monstrous carbuncle" remark at RIBA's own 150th anniversary dinner. But too often Joe Public and Lord Dome of Riverside still regard each other with bemusement.

In these fraught circumstances RIBA could and should bridge the gap between public and practitioners. Its recent good deeds have not been negligible. It launched a National Architecture Week with a "mission to explain" and a nationwide search for brownfield sites, and backed a project to build "smart" homes (smart in the computer sense, that is) in a doomed attempt to charm us out of our love affair with mock-Georgian semis. But these innovations have been overshadowed by petty internal spats and the odd scandal, notably over RIBA's slapdash treatment of its unique stash of 600,000 architectural drawings. What's more, its old "guild" powers have been eroded by a turf war with the new Architects' Registration Board.

The real problem is that many members regard RIBA as little more than a trade union. That was made clear when a proposal to change the word "Architects" in its title to "Architecture" — thus signalling a wider missionary role — met with fury. "We are the keepers of the keys, not charitable do-gooders," fumed George Oldham, who is (incredibly) the Professor of Architecture at Newcastle University.

This month's race for the presidency reflects those tensions. One candidate, Colin James, is a veteran RIBA "insider" who could be expected to preserve the *status quo*. He is robustly opposed by an architect from Godalming, John Wright, who sees himself as champion of the "grass roots" — the 26,995 architects whose names are not Rogers, Foster, Hopkins, Grimshaw or Alsop — and who thinks that RIBA has become an "exclusive club".

But there is an intriguing third candidate. Marco Goldschmied is managing director of the Richard Rogers Partnership, and thus bang in the centre of architecture's well-connected metropolitan elite. But he has surprising passions. For instance, he personally funds a £5,000 Stephen Lawrence Memorial Award, commemorating the murdered teenager who wanted to become an architect. He says he wants to "re-establish public understanding of what architecture can do".

And, as befits the man who turned Billingsgate fish market into a high-tech money-trading hall, he strongly believes in urban regeneration, and thinks that much more lottery money should be diverted to this end. Although he carefully stresses that he will champion the merits of architects over lesser craftsmen — surveyors, project managers — who are muscling in on their territory, Goldschmied is alone in offering RIBA a missionary philosophy that adds up to more than the sum of its 27,000 members' self-interests.

I have no idea whether this will win him the presidency, but it is surely the best way for RIBA to go. Britain has some of the world's best architects, and some of the dreariest urban landscapes. That the former haven't been put to work more often on improving the latter is a national disgrace. But it's up to architects to convince us that they can be trusted to produce beauty out of decay. RIBA must speak up, and speak well.

My kingdom for a tour

THEATRE: As the RSC's *Richard III* arrives in the West End, director **Elijah Moshinsky** tells how audience reactions and Chinese meals shaped the play on tour



‘Provincial audiences felt Shakespeare had anticipated Peter Mandelson’

ELIJAH MOSHINSKY

A touring production of a play is quite different from touring a production of a play before its West End run. If the tour is a try-out for the West End, the relationship with the audience is governed by the idea that they are guinea-pigs for the London success. Often the director is left in a post mortem with an author in a Chinese restaurant in, say, Woking saying: "Perhaps accountants on stage just aren't funny in Woking."

However, with the tour of *Richard III* I discovered that a production brought to a city simply to present the play creates a different sort of attention. The audience don't try to guess how it will go in London; they take it as a special performance for themselves. Sometimes the response can be genuinely moving. In the middle of our first week in Manchester we received our first, and entirely unexpected, standing ovation. This production does not have one of those RSC applause-getting curtain calls. No rushing forward as a group, no dancing; just a simple bow — I never got around to working out anything more elaborate. But suddenly the audience stood, applauded and cheered. Almost every town we went to would get one of these spontaneous outbursts.

At times on tour the medieval history outlined in the play seemed to be received like local history. The Middle Ages somehow seem closer outside London. One of the ideas in the production was to use regional accents to reinforce the cultural differences of the various factions. Margaret spoke in a French accent and Yorkists were clearly from the North. Richard would occasionally reveal his northern roots in his speech. The Woodvilles were definitely posh and Buckingham, the most princely character on stage, was smoothly Etonian.

Without any undue stress being laid on it, provincial audiences kept repeating the insight that Buckingham was very much a spin-doctor, that Shakespeare had somehow anticipated the character of Peter Mandelson. More significantly, during an interval in Sheffield, a group of students found the identification between the intrigue in the play and the current state of the Government so strong that one of them kept asking: "If Buckingham is Mandelson, who is Richard meant to be?"

Touring is rather frowned upon by metropolitan critics. It suggests educational programming, Open University classics, hand-me-down standards, wrinkly tights and luvvies in lodgings. The experience of our tour of *Richard III* was very far from that. We were sold out at every venue — in Manchester we were told that we broke all box-office records for a straight play at the 2,200-seat Palace Theatre.

Last year, however, was the year in which "boutique theatre" seemed to carry the day. It was the small auditorium productions, the chic of film stars renouncing their salaries for the intimate experience of performing naked to a select few that generated new excitement. Theatre critics seem to have a strange attitude to commercialism and access. It seems the Royal Opera House, with its 2,000-seat auditorium for a middle-class public, is elitist, while *The Blue Room* at the Donmar was deemed OK. For some reason small auditoriums with middle-class metropolitan audiences are *not* elitist. It is as if a moral purity of artistic intent can be derived from performing in a warehouse in London, whereas the Palace Theatre, Manchester, and the New Theatre, Cardiff, suggest patronising populism and naff commercialism.

I suspect that the theatre is experiencing a split here, which reflects the cultural divide between new and old Labour. One is very Islington, and the other is very Bradford and Bingley.

The inspiration for this production is the casting of Robert Lindsay as Richard. By the end of rehearsals we realised that we had a shape to the performance, but that its particular energy relied entirely on Richard's ability to communicate directly with the audience. With Lindsay this communication has a very special quality. He seems to form an instinctive bond with the audience based on a shared sense of humour; nothing is forced or acted. But in Manchester, we discovered that this could overbalance the play and undercut the viscousness of the story. So, over yet another Chinese meal, we started to work on a more sinister use of Lindsay's charisma. We worked to simplify the performance and to play a potentially tragic character who had to face the emptiness of his political scheming — and by the end of the tour, he had created a completely contemporary political character in a medieval world.

● *Richard III opens at the Savoy Theatre (0171-240 1166) on Monday*

DONALD COOPER



Robert Lindsay in Elijah Moshinsky's production: in Manchester, an imbalance was detected in the performance

Nearly motoring

DESPITE an attachment to the the Fiat Cinquecento, B.P. Zoom is not a new brand of supercharged petroleum for the smaller car. Indeed, allowing *B.P. Zoom* anywhere near your automobile is likely to result in spiritually possessed windscreen wipers, autonomously syncopated headlights and a nasty accident. For B.P. Zoom are a silent double act with a habit of leaving epic levels of destruction in their wake: lighting rigs explode, vertebrae crack like maracas and theatres flood as they attempt to present a series of lighthearted musical numbers.

MIME FESTIVAL

In approximately real life, American Mr B cultivated a rapport with French Mr P over a series of impromptu spoon-playing lessons. In *Zoom* there is still an unmistakable air of teacher and pupil to them, as the exacting Mr B waddles scoldingly around the stage in his tailcoat followed at an eager lollop by the maladroit Mr P. It is a classic dumb-and-dumber set-up; however much Mr B attempts to discipline his partner, it is always eventually Mr P who is really in control, more often than not because he has messed something up and attempted to conceal it.

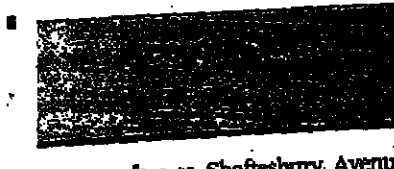
The show takes the form of a number of cabaret set pieces, which range from the delightfully silly — a chase scene conducted on wheelie office chairs — to the technically sophisticated high point, in which the stage transforms into an aquarium complete with wavy weed, bubbles and two very foolish fish. This is really all harmless family entertainment, with most of the humour arising from the tension between their on-stage rivalry and mutual dependence.

Slick as the show is, the action never quite reaches the level of sidesplitting hilarity. But perhaps this doesn't matter, since this pair know how to milk applause until it curdles.

HETTIE JUDAH

We are just about amused, Master

Enterprising of Wimbledon's Attic Theatre Company to revive an obscure Coward musical in a centenary year that promises to bring us celebrated Coward plays galore; but somehow I do not expect to hear that Cameron Mackintosh is dashing about SW19 yelling "Eureka!" and organising transfers to Shaftesbury Avenue.



Ace of Clubs was a flop when it bumbled into the West End in 1950, and 50 years later it is hard to see it as anything more than proof that the Master was not just a suave wit in a silk dressing gown. On his day he could be as amiably naff as any nobody.

Val Parnell, the impresario Coward originally expected to present the show, rejected it because he thought the book inferior to the score; and one sees what he meant. Certainly Coward must have ditched his dressing-gown for a fluffy cardigan when he concocted the tale of the tar who woos the nightclub chanteuse with a boss who is being manipulated into handling stolen jewellery by a gangster called Joe Snyder. Though there is something refreshingly innocent about the show's portrayal of postwar Soho — black marketeering in nylons, spivs with shooters you never for a moment believe will hurt anyone — the innocence is hardly enough to refresh a tired, sentimental plot.

MARILYN KINGWILL



Hello, sailor: Claire Carrie (Pinkie) gets close to Russell Wilcox (Harry)

Some of the songs have the laid-back, bittersweet sound one associates with Coward; but their lyrics, when not poor, seem mechanically smart. Claire Carrie's Pinkie sings about love, her growing fondness for Harry ("when he lifts his eyebrows I blush like a girl of 15"), and the charm of "London town". Russell Wilcox's Harry delivers a hornpipe about "the gay salty sort of tang" of sailors, a dire patter-song about his fascination with America ("in New Orleans the wrought-iron screens are dreadfully overwrought"), and the better-known, more tuneful *Sail Away*. A completely irrelevant number about Napoleon's Josephine has modestly amusing moments, but again and again you notice that Coward's "wit" consists of placing the rhyme just before a repeated word or phrase: "lonely girl, only girl", "I want to find my kind of man, I've never defined my kind of man", etc, etc.

Yet Jenny Lee's production bangs affably along amid the red drapes and ace-of-club patterns of Rodney Cottam and Trelawnie Mead's cosy little nighterie. Moreover, Carrie is consistently appealing and easy on the ear, and Peter Gale and his supporting dancers add plenty of verve. When these lovelies swirl around wearing orange dungarees and carrying milk bottles, or bounce about with balloons attached to their bottoms, it is easier to be amused than exasperated by the show's ineptitude. This time, the Master was human enough to be second-hand and second-rate.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

■ LISTINGS
Messiaen weekend

ARTS

■ JAZZ ALBUMS
Petrucciani remembered

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON

VISIONS: The Music of Olivier Messiaen. A weekend dedicated to the life and music of the 20th-century master. The opening concert tonight (Westminster Cathedral, 7.30pm) by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davis is followed by an organ recital (10pm) by Naji Hakim. Tributes continue on Sat and Sun (assorted venues) with further concerts by the BBC SO as well as contributions by musicians who were close to the composer during his life.
Barbican Box Office (0171-638 8891).

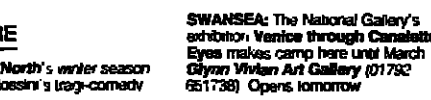
IN FLAME: The tangled worlds of a modern woman and an Edwardian miss (Valerie Gogan, Emma Dewhurst) collide in Charlotte Jones's new play, directed by Anna Mackmin.
Bush (0181-743 3388) Opens tonight, 7pm

YOUNG MUSICIANS AT THE TAB: Start of a new chamber music series aimed at providing a platform for a new generation of talent. The inaugural gala kicks off with performances by three of today's leading artists Melvyn Tan, Steven Isserlis and Michael Collins, playing Haydn, Beethoven and Debussy.
The Tabernacle, W11 (0171-565 7800) Sunday, 5pm

FACES OF THE NIGHT: Or Everybody Gets The Demons They Deserve. Figurentheater Tübingen creates an obituary for Max Jacob: painter, poet and Gestapo victim, performed by puppeteer Frank Soehnle and 13 rubber devils.
ICA (071-930 3647) Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm

ELSEWHERE

LEEDS: *Opera North*'s *winter* season continues with Rossini's tragi-comedy *The Thieving Magpie*. Mary Hegarty sings Ninetta with Christopher Purvis as the Mayor. Mark Tinkler directs.
Grand Theatre (0113-245 9351) Tonight, 7.15pm


James MacMillan leads the RSNO in Glasgow

GLASGOW: James MacMillan conducts the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** in his own Trumpet Concerto prefaced by two Scottish premieres by Gerald Barry. Sibelius's ground-breaking Fifth Symphony concludes the evening.
Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511) Sunday, 7pm

SWANSEA: The National Gallery's exhibition **Venice through Canaletto's Eyes** makes camp here until March.
Glynn Vivian Art Gallery (01792 651738) Opens tomorrow

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
■ **House full, returns only** ◪ **Some seats available** □ **Seats at all prices**

◪ **ALEGRIA:** The breathtakingly exotic Cirque du Soleil returns to London for the fourth successive year with further prodigious feats of contortions, lethal-looking trapeze acts, fire-eating and clowning.
Albert Hall (0171-589 8212)

□ **I WEEP AT MY PIANO:** Told By An Idiot regulars Hayley Carmichael, Richard Clews and Stephen Harper play Lorca, Dali and Bunuel in a hallucinatory evocation of Lorca's last hours. Paul Hunter directs.
BAC (0171-223 2223) Ⓢ

□ **ACE OF CLUBS:** Noël Coward's musical frivolity (songs include Sail Away and Something About a Sailor) dating from 1949 and set in a seedy Soho night club. See review, page 35.
Wimbledon Studio (0181-540 0362).

□ **KRAPP'S LAST TAPE:** Edward Petherbridge's touring performance as Beckett's ancient sensualist replaying lost time. Also the rarely performed Breath — total playing time: 35 seconds.
Arts Theatre (0171-836 3334).

◪ **THE MEMORY OF WATER:** Alison Steadman, Samantha Bond and Julia Sawalha star in Shelagh Stephenson's acclaimed drama of family memories. Terry Johnson directs.
Vaudeville (0171-836 9987).

◪ **PERFECT DAYS:** Siobhan Redmond's award-winning performance as the thirtysomething celebrity hairdresser longing for a baby. John Tiffany directs Liz Lochhead's comedy.
Hampstead (0171-722 9301). Ⓢ

■ **CHICAGO:** Maria Friedman injects new blood into the hit revival of Kander and Ebb's musical about murder and fickle fame.
Adelphi (0171-344 0055). Ⓢ

□ **JESUS MY BOY:** Tom Conti in John Dowie's fitfully amusing comedy giving Joseph's side of the story.
Apollo (0171-494 5070)

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

MEET JOE BLACK (12): Brad Pitt's comic, charming Joe Black, aka Death, bribes Anthony Hopkins's media tycoon to introduce him to the joys of life. Director Martin Brest tries to give equal credibility to both characters, but ends up with a long-winded, uneven melodrama. Claire Forlani supplies the bewitching love interest.

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18): Christina Ricci plays a caustic, trashy 16-year-old who stitches up her gay step-brother by stealing his boyfriend and high-tailing it to LA. A blistering comedy on political correctness.

BUTTONERS (no cert): Ingenious low-budget Czech film by Petr Zelenka that stitches six stories about modern mores into a daisy chain of quirky, sometimes kinky, coincidences.

DOBERMANN (18): Stylish French splatter movie by Jan Kounen with Vincent Cassel as the charismatic leader of a gang of ultra-violent bank robbers. Fabulously clichéd, grossly amusing, and awesomely incorrect.

SOUR GRAPES (15): Sitcom dressed up as a film by Larry David, co-creator of Seinfeld. Two cousins (Craig Bierko and Steven Weber) fall out over a jackpot win in Atlantic city. Starts getting mildly amusing when Weber's brain surgeon accidentally emasculates a patient.

CURRENT

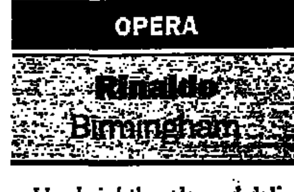
LITTLE VOICE (15): Mark Herman's wonderful version of Jim Cartwright's stage hit. Jane Horrocks sings glorious covers of torch song divas. Michael Caine, Ewan McGregor, Brenda Blethyn and Jim Broadbent sleaze around in the foreground.

THE SIEGE (15): Denzel Washington, Annette Bening, and Bruce Willis trip *over each others' bootlaces as they* try and defuse an Arab terrorist offensive in Manhattan. Chillingly real, beautifully acted.

π (PI) (15): Low-budget sci-fi adventure by David Aronofsky that charts the madness of a genius mathematician who is haunted by nightmares and money-mad investors. Sean Gullette is the mesmerising lead.

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (PG): A reassuringly scratchy reprint of *Howard Hawks's 1944 classic* in which Lauren Bacall shoots fish in a barrel and Humphrey Bogart falls madly in love.

Fireworks from Handel


OPERA
Rinaldo
Birmingham

The concert format is probably the only way to perform *Rinaldo* nowadays: you don't have to worry about the "two huge Dragons out of whose Mouths issue Fire and Smoke", mermaids dancing up and down in the water, a magic mountain that swallows up the crusading army "with Thunder, Lightning and amazing Noises". But at least the colourful stage directions of 1711 were printed in the programme to remind us that in his first London opera Handel made concessions to British audiences' taste for spectacle.

And he knocked 'em in the aisles musically as well: this is a real young man's opera with the kitchen sink thrown in twice over: a prominent role for woodwind, mini-concertos for harpsichord, violin and recorder, four trumpets, many more duets than you find in the later works, unashamedly show-stopping numbers including the rollicking march purloined for *The Beggar's Opera*. This precisely calculated showbizzy assault worked: there are innumerable later, more mature masterpieces (and bankruptcies) to prove it. Handel was made.

Wednesday's concert marked one of the all-too-few appearances here of Cecilia Bartoli, which ensured a packed Symphony Hall. But when Handel operas are performed uncut there are no "principal" roles, and Bartoli behaved very much as *prima inter pares*. She sang Almirena, the heroine, a role hitherto associated with lyric sopranos; no problem with the notes, of course, and only very occasionally did you feel that they were not sitting in quite the right part of the voice.

Her brightly coloured delivery of the Italian text, her spunky characterisation of a character that can seem milksoppy, were all gain; her song to the birds (lovely recorder solo by Rachel Brown) went wonderfully. As for the hit number "Lascia ch'io pianga" (taken very slowly), experts will argue forever and a day whether or not her near-veristic colouring of the words, her lavish expressive effects compromised the essential simplicity of the musical line.

If there is a star role, it is Rinaldo himself, sung with Marilyn Horne-like weight and spirit by Ewa Podles. Every musical mood was caught, from the Purcellian lament "Cara sposa" to the show-stopping "Or la tromba". The soprano Maria Costanza Nocentini brought proper Italianate fire to the sorceress Armida, and Hilary Summers's warm, contained timbre was in neat balance with the other two mezzos as Goffredo.

Men do get a look in. Gerald Finley, sporting a flippant bow-tie to show he was a villain, sang almost too forcefully as Argante, and after a shaky start Daniel Taylor settled down to sing sweetly and securely as Eustazio. The only problem was Christopher Hogwood's somewhat pedestrian conducting of the Academy of Ancient Music; all perfectly sound, but a score as brilliant as this demands a bit more.

RODNEY MILNES


Cecilia Bartoli: her "spunky characterisation" of Handel's milksoppy heroine was a plus

Period players please

Brahms on period instruments is in itself nothing new — indeed, the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** has essayed a couple of the symphonies and the Violin Concerto. But it has never before tackled the D minor Piano Concerto, and there was thus much interest surrounding the concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tuesday evening.

The conductor originally billed was Herbert Blomstedt, but in the event it was the Dane **Michael Schønwandt** who led the orchestra through the Brahms, as well as Schubert's Symphony No 3 in D and Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*. Some of the gloss was taken off the occasion when an unfortunate member of the audience was taken seriously ill towards the end of the first movement, and Schønwandt rightly waited for the paramedics before starting the second movement, a distressing hiatus that helped no one.

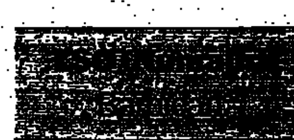
But it was in any case a performance of mixed fortunes. Alexei Lubimov, playing a Bösendorfer of c.1871 with a single escapement Viennese action, sparkled in the solo part, his light touch bringing a welcome breath of fresh air.

There was a translucence to the orchestral texture too, with detail emerging that is far less audible when homogenised modern wind are swamped by sumptuous string tone. On the negative side, some wind and brass (notably bassoons and horns) had tuning problems. Lubimov, for his part, failed to point up all the subtleties of articulation that his instrument might have revealed, though he did well to compensate in expressivity for the thinness of his piano's tone.

In the Mendelssohn and Schubert, the distinctive timbres of wind and brass made a vibrant contribution, notably Antony Pay's idyllically tranquil clarinet in the former.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Heart of the maestro



Mstislav Rostropovich's performances can range from the brilliantly inspired to the reckless, and at either end of the scale there is frequently an epic dimension to them too. But it is not often that the great cellist visits all these extremes in a single evening: whether or not it was wise programming to devote an entire concert to works for cello and orchestra — and the lack of contrast was acutely felt here — this London Symphony Orchestra outing gave Rostropovich a chance to perform another of his feats.

If nothing else, it proved that his phenomenal energy is undiminished. The man who has commissioned more than 60 concertos and aims to score a century ended the concert by giving the first British performance of Sofia Gubaidulina's *The Canticle of the Sun*, composed in honour of his 70th birthday. The new piece is not a traditional concerto: the soloist enters into a kind of "responsorial" dialogue with a large battery of percussion (Neil Percy and Simon Carrington), celesta (John Alley) and chorus (London Voices), and is even required to play some percussion instruments.

Rostropovich seemed undaunted here, unfazed too by having to untune his cello and scrape away at the "non-playing" parts of it. But such good ideas as it contains are not enough to sustain its 45 minutes' duration. With its slow pulse, and use of voices and bells to make an often glassy sound, it belongs to the group of spiritual works which make up an ever-increasing part of Gubaidulina's output: it is inspired by St Francis of Assisi, and in spite of ending with a glorification of death is a celebratory piece designed, as the composer puts it, "to reveal the sunny personality of a brilliant musician".

Ironically, the writing is just too buttoned up to reveal much of Rostropovich. Sparse textures predominate throughout, hardly changing even when the music does move faster. Both the rippling sound evoked in the second of its four episodes and the ecstatic, other-worldly close are strangely effective, but not enough to confirm Gubaidulina's status as one of the leading figures of post-Soviet music.

The first half of the concert featured Saint-Saëns's First Cello Concerto and Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, and if some solo details were lost in the faster movements, these were big-hearted performances. Under Ryusuke Numajiri's assured baton, Rostropovich matched the silky orchestral playing in Saint-Saëns's minuet with solo work of real delicacy, and conjured up lyricism and grace in the Tchaikovsky.

JOHN ALLISON

Alive in the mind

■ **MICHEL PETRUCCIANI**
Solo Live
(Dreyfus FDM 36597-8)
THE death from pneumonia on January 6 of the French pianist Michel Petrucciani — aged 36 — has robbed the jazz world of one of its most extravagantly gifted talents. Just how sensational his live performances were can be heard on this album, which documents an evening's solo music in Frankfurt in February 1997. Few pianists, post-Tatum, have been possessed of such inexhaustible improvisational fluency; even fewer have achieved the luminous delicacy with which Petrucciani imbued his music's quieter moments.

Here, in a cleverly programmed concert that concentrates on lyrical, surprisingly vigorous originals but climaxes in an extraordinary ten-minute visit to the Ellington/Tizol classic *Caravan*, Petrucciani delights with his unique mix of tender intimacy and robust playfulness.

JAZZ ALBUMS

■ **MARCUS ROBERTS**
The Joy of Joplin
(Sony Classical SK 60554)
ALTHOUGH his penchant for revisiting the work of Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton and Thelonious Monk — not to mention Gershwin — has led to his being labelled a repertory pianist, Marcus Roberts is a superb improviser with a considerable compositional gift. Here, in a 16-track solo album divided equally between Scott Joplin ragtime classics and originals, Roberts achieves the project's stated goal "to bring the sound of ragtime together with the sounds of European classical music and the sounds of 20th-century blues and swing".

Reinterpreting Joplin from his own perspective — that of a jazz-piano historian fluent in all the form's dialects, from stride and boogie-woogie through Latin to swing and bebop — might not have pleased the late master himself, but it makes for a thoroughly absorbing, and at times quite exhilarating, album — a fine appetiser for Roberts's forthcoming UK live dates.

CHRIS PARKER

■ POP INTERVIEW
Da Doo Ron Ronnie

ARTS

■ POP ALBUMS
Hot from clubland

Spector lays a few ghosts

This is the story of Ronnie and Phil, the beehived rock'n'roll madonna and her . . . well, just read on

Veronica Bennett was 17 when Phil Spector first rang. "Me and my sister were in our pyjamas on the bed. I had the pillow over my head and I was screaming 'Yay! She's talking to Phil Spector!' "

Ronnie Spector is a goddess. Her CV is rock'n'roll incarnate: she was the lead singer of the Ronettes, and went on to marry the record producer who built the Wall of Sound. When she offers me a cigarette, the fact I haven't smoked for a year makes no difference; I smoke the cigarette because if you ever get the chance, you have to smoke a ciggie with Ronnie Spector. She's the Wife of Bath with sexy, winky, slanty eyes: her laugh is like being shot and half of the interview is utterly unprintable filth.

CAITLIN MORAN

Back in the 1960s, she invented rock'n' roll for girls. She dressed the Ronettes in tight slit skirts and messy beehives and they had competitions to see whose eyeliner went out the furthest. When she sang *Be My Baby* and *Walking in the Rain* it was the sound of hot, wild heartbreak. The first thing the Beatles did on their first trip to New York was request a meeting with the Ronettes, because John had it bad for Ronnie. Unfortunately for her, Phil Spector had it bad for her too.

"Everyone always expects me to speak bad of Phil, but I would never have married him if he was crappy," she cackles. "When we were just dating it was wonderful. But he was more of a father to me than a lover — I went straight from my parents to him, and it kept me like a little girl." Once they wed, this state of affairs escalated. Phil locked her in their mansion in LA, surrounded the house with barbed wire and five dogs trained to kill and forbade her to talk to "the servants". She wasn't allowed to read books and her TV viewing was closely monitored — "Just *Mission: Impossible*."

While Phil locked himself in his study, screaming obscenities down the phone, Ronnie turned to part-time alcoholism to while the time away. "Well, I was so bored! Phil wouldn't let me tour, or record, or see the other Ronettes. So I went into this room one day, and pressed this button, and a huge bar swung out loaded with Scotch. No one had ever taught me to drink, so I'd just hold my nose and gulp it down until I was light-headed. That kept me in the marriage another year."

Possibly sensing Ronnie's boredom, Phil tried a time-honoured tactic to keep his wife amused: he made her a mother. "We went down to the park, and he pointed out these twins, about five years old, with blond hair and blue eyes. He said: 'What do you think of them?' and I said: 'They're adorable', because I love kids. Then I got home, and the two little boys were running around my fountain, and Phil was shouting: 'Surprise! I've adopted them! Merry Christmas!' "

Ronnie still looks shocked at the memory of it. "I mean, you can give a girl a present of a car, or a dog or something; but twins! I wanted my own kids. I didn't understand why Phil would want to adopt — unless he couldn't have kids and never told me."

He never explained it to you? "No, he never explained anything to me," Ronnie says, adding briskly: "That's why I left." She left in the middle of the night in her mother's car, barefoot and penniless. Two years later, she married her current husband/manager, and now has two children by him.

Although most people would claim Spector pretty much ruined her life, she actually ruined his.

"Yes! That's so right!" She slaps the table. "Because I'm so happy now, but Phil has no children, no wife, no career. Yeah! I ruined his life! Damn straight!"

Newly signed to Creation Records, the home of Oasis, Ronnie can see her career on the upswing again. Her recent London date was a sweaty affair: "It was such a turn-on! I thought 'I got to get away from here, or I'm going to have an orgasm on stage!' "

The first track on her new EP, *She Talks to Rainbows*, is about her time with Spector, of the time when she was so lonely "the birds in the trees were the only people I talked to". Ronnie sings it like she's mad with loneliness: all heartbreaking vibrato and wild phrasing. The Bad Girl of rock'n'roll's still got it.

"Well, Bad Girls understand that the reason you sing a song is important," she says. "Every song's got to have a reason to live." She picked the other songs on her EP by the same criterion. *Don't Worry Baby* is on there, for example — it was originally written for her by Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, but Spector stopped her recording it in the 1960s. "The reason for recording it now is that my Mom just passed away, so when I sing 'Don't worry, baby, everything's going to be all right', I'm my mother, singing to me," she says. "She went through everything with me. I wish I could give her a copy."

● *She Talks To Rainbows is released on Monday*


Once a star, always a star: Ronnie Spector is proof of the old adage that living — and looking — well is the best revenge

Rooks to black kings? Check

NEW POP ALBUMS

THE BLACK CROWES
By Your Side
(Columbia 491699 £14.49)

FROM Guns n' Roses to Georgia Satellites, the history of rock'n'roll is littered with bands who have come unstuck trying to emulate the hard-driving music and bad-boy lifestyle of the Rolling Stones. So far, only Aerosmith have come close to rivalling the Stones' consistency or longevity, but moving up on the far side are the Black Crowes, who mark the end of a turbulent first decade with an album brimful of energy, confidence and road-toughened swagger.

The opening track, *Go Faster*, functions both as a bone-shaking loosener and a manifesto. For, as numbers such as *Kickin' My Heart Around* and *Go Tell the Congregation* pile in, it soon becomes apparent that *By Your Side* is the speediest album the band from Atlanta has ever made. It is quite possibly the heaviest too, with the juddering, stop-start riffing of *HorseHead* in particular inviting flattering comparisons with Led Zeppelin.

There are slower, more thoughtful offerings too, including the Stax-influenced *Only a Fool* and *Diamond Ring*, where the nonchalant Southern soul riff inspires a mood so uplifting you can forgive singer Chris Robinson his rather workaday rhymes ("name", "game", "pain" and "same" in the first four lines).

By Your Side is not an album that pays heed to fashionable developments, let alone the niceties of mainstream tastes, and, frankly, it sounds all the better for it.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The End 1
(XL Recordings XLCD127: two discs £15.99)

AS PATRONS of the End will know, the club in London's West End takes its music seriously, a policy reflected in its first carefully compiled and extravagantly packaged double-album *The End 1*. Disc One is an intriguingly diverse collection of tracks each representing a particular night at the club. It embraces a fair cross-section of the bewildering array of current dance sub-genres including big beat (Lo-Fidelity Allstars), drum & bass (Roni Size), hip hop (Company Flow), deep house (Aqua Bassino) and garage (Roy Davis). Disc Two is a more homogenous tech-house set mixed by the club's co-founders and resident DJs — Mr C, Layo and Matthew "Bushwacka" B.

Although rhythmically ingenious and effortlessly stylish, there is a tendency for this kind of music to sound harmonically challenged, especially when heard over such a long stretch. When the simple but sprightly bass line of *Music Makes You Lose Control* by Les Rhythm Digitales starts up it leaps out of the speakers, a welcome splash of melodic colour amid a sea of monochrome beats.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Music From Dee Snider's Strangeland the Movie
(Coalition 3984 25515 £15.99)

HISTORY has not been kind to Twisted Sister, the heavy metal band from New York who made the most of a weak hand during the 1980s thanks to the antics of their singer, Dee Snider.

After a lengthy absence, Snider now returns as the star of an unpleasant-sounding movie called *Strangeland*, which he wrote himself. For what is described as "the ultimate loud rock soundtrack", he has assembled a collection of tracks by a cornucopia of contemporary metal bands, ranging from icons including Megadeth, Marilyn Manson, Pantera and the reconvened Twisted Sister, to up-and-coming headbangers with names such as Coal Chamber, Bile and Snot. Amid much idle flexing of volume controls and lots of chundering, thundering guitar riffs, there is little to snag the attention let alone raise the spirits, although Nashville P**sy's boy power anthem *I'm The Man* provides a rare moment of comic relief.

DAVID SINCLAIR

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

TOP TEN ALBUMS

Pos	(Last week)	Title	Artist (Label)
1	(2)	I've Been Expecting You	Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
2	(1)	Ladies & Gentlemen - the Best of	George Michael (Epic)
3	(8)	You've Come a Long Way, Baby	Fatboy Slim (Skint)
4	(4)	Talk on Corners	Corrs (Atlantic)
5	(5)	Where We Belong	Boyzone (Polydor)
6	(4)	Step One	Steps (Jive)
7	(6)	Ray of Light	Madonna (Maverick)
8	(7)	The Best of 1980-1990	U2 (Island)
9	(-)	Forgiven, not Forgotten	Corrs (Atlantic)
10	(9)	The Best of	M People (M People)

COPYRIGHT CIN ● *Figure in brackets indicates last week's position*

What has he done to our songs?

His name is Edgar Bronfman Jr, and the future of pop could well be in his hands. **Paul Sexton** reports

The potential fallout from the newly completed merger of PolyGram and Universal Records has made this one of the most nervous weeks in corporate music history. The shotgun marriage of these dual giants was legalised last May, when the Canadian drinks manufacturer Seagram, which already owned Universal, announced it had reached agreement with Philips for the acquisition of PolyGram for $10.4 billion.

As a result, Universal Music Group will become the heaviest hitter in the music ring, with about a quarter of the global market, leapfrogging the four other major corporations, Sony, WEA, EMI and BMG. UMG now incorporates such famed labels as Mercury, Polydor, Island and Geffen and has such international million-sellers on its books as U2, Boyzone, Sheryl Crow, Aqua, Shania Twain, All Saints and Hanson.

The financial price may have been high, but the cost in human and creative terms is proving just as steep. In the new dawn choreographed by Edgar Bronfman Jr, for ten years the president and chief executive of Seagram, several PolyGram executives have already jumped or been pushed, and many artists from outside the new company's top tier of acts are widely seen as heading the same way.

All week employees have been awaiting the details of a budget trim that, some say, will look as if it has been carried out by Edward Scissorhands. The figure popularly quoted for worldwide redundancies is 3,000, with Seagram supposedly calling for $300 million to be sliced from annual operating costs.

Oliver Smallman, managing director of the highly successful management company and independent label First Avenue, whose acts include Eternal, Louise and Dina Carroll, says of the merger: "It is dramatic. It's a sizeable change in a market that's having a bit of a rough ride at the moment."

In one of the deal's first casualties, an entire PolyGram-owned label bit the dust last summer, when the UK arm of A&M — home in its day to the Carpenters and the Police — ceased operation. Then yesterday, as part of a restructuring of UMG's British companies, it was announced that the UK division of Universal will cease to be a stand-alone label, and will merge with Island.

Meanwhile, Geffen Records, one of the bastions of American rock, has also fallen under the wheels of UMG progress. David Geffen's company will soon vacate its offices on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, to merge with Interscope and A&M's American operation, and will face the future as a mere logo.

Stories circulate daily about labels being gobbled up, Pac-man-style — indeed the PolyGram-owned London label, home of All Saints, Ace Of Base and Echo & the Bunnymen, has been rumoured to be attracting the attention of EMI, having seemed bound for Warner Music.


SHAUN BEST/REUTERS
Why is this man smiling? Ed Bronfman Jr, the head of Seagram, which has bought PolyGram for $10.4 billion

Warner, in turn, last week bought the independent China label, triggering immediate redundancies for half of its staff. EMI itself might attract an offer from BMG, and thus the merry-go-round spins on, sending an icy wind of uncertainty through an industry already showing signs of frostbite.

And it gets worse. Doom-laden editorials in the trade press are heralding the arrival of a technological anarchy in which the Internet will plant a bomb underneath the corporate structure of music for the masses. The Semtex comes in the tiny form of the MP3, a hand-held digital recorder capable of downloading soundfiles direct from the Net. As American youngsters begin to access their favourite music with a click of the mouse, the major labels wail about copyright infringement and retailers begin to notice empty floorspace where kids once stood queueing to buy CDs.

Whatever the legal outcome, the Internet issue marks a new low in the already frosty relationship between record companies and their more militant artists. Five years after George Michael took on Sony Music in the battle of creative ownership — and lost — the rap group Public Enemy have given the finger to their (PolyGram-owned) Def Jam label by making a new song available for free download via their website.

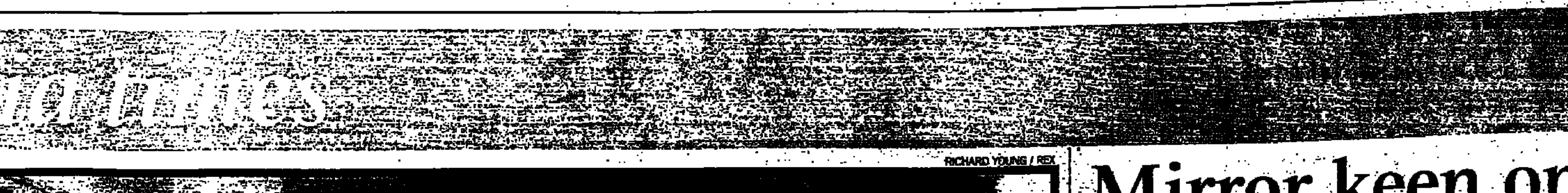
The track, *Swindler's Lust*, minces no words on the subject of alleged corporate tyranny, likening the lot of contemporary artists to the shackles of slavery. "If you don't own the master, the master owns you," growls group leader Chuck D.

"If the Internet poses a threat to anyone, it's to the retailer," says Simon Lawlor, manager of the British band Shed Seven. "At the end of the day, you've still got to have someone to make the record, and you still need the muscle of record companies."

His band, which has sold some 750,000 records over the past five years, was inaccurately reported to have been dropped by the UMG regime, doubtless causing panic among less successful acts in the fold. Lawlor and Polydor UK managing director Lucian Grainge's assurances that Shed Seven remain firmly on the roster will bring a glimmer of comfort, but plenty of pink slips are nonetheless likely to be waved in the next few days.

Still, there is life after redundancy. Many former major-label staffers are now much happier working for themselves. "They want you to think you can't survive without them," a friend told me. "But within two weeks, I knew I'd be OK."

As is the way with creative culls, the losers will curse the remorseless capitalism of the major sector while the winners will carry on basking, at least for now, in its rewards. Smallman can even see the funny side of PolyGram's ownership passing from Philips to Seagram. "I'm a lot happier with a drinks company running it than a company that makes vacuum cleaners," he says. "At least it's something the industry is known for. It's spiritually appropriate."





RICHARD YOUNG / REX

Sophie Rhys-Jones's relationship with Prince Edward is "probably the best training anyone could want in media relations", says her business partner Murray Harkin

Pitfalls of the PR superstar

Public relations is about gaining attention, but what if the spotlight shines on the wrong person, asks Meg Carter

Public relations professionals are paid to get their clients publicity, so what happens when they, rather than their clients, make the news? In the case of Charlie Whelan, press secretary to the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, the answer was simple: resign. However, Sophie Rhys-Jones, PR executive and royal bride-to-be, faces a far trickier balancing act. A week after the announcement of her engagement to Prince Edward, it's back to work at R-JH, the PR firm that she owns with her business partner, Murray Harkin.

They set up the company two years ago with eyes wide open. "We discussed all eventualities," says Harkin, "including what would happen if Sophie got engaged. Now it's business as usual. She continues to work at the company and will continue to do so after the wedding."

For a PR professional to steal the limelight is by no means unique. Gordon Brown's girlfriend Sarah Macaulay, Prince Andrew's former girlfriend Aurelia Cecil, Matthew Freud and even Julia Carling are all PR people who *became* the news. Having a high profile, however, presents an array of challenges for those serious about developing a solid public relations business. "For the PR person to be in the spotlight is the ultimate professional crime," says Adrian Wheeler, chairman of the Public Relations Consultants' Association and chief executive of the PR firm CGI. "If the PR becomes the star, it inverts any sort of advisory role they might once have had."

Wheeler believes that the fundamental rule of good PR must always be to put the clients first. Those who find themselves in the limelight often find it impossible to do their job. For some, the only option is to get out, he adds, pointing to Julia Carling, who switched to television.



High-profile: Aurelia Cecil, left, and Sarah Macaulay

Brian MacLaurin, chairman of the PR firm MCM, agrees. He found himself in the news last week, as Sophie Rhys-Jones's former boss and the person responsible for introducing her to Prince Edward: "A good PR person is high-profile among journalists, but that's not the same as being high-profile in the news," he says. "To be effective, you should be in the background."

One of the greatest challenges for a PR professional is to get people to talk to you. "If you mix with well-known personalities, businesses and charities and people cross the room to talk to you, then you're ahead of 99 per cent of everyone else," says MacLaurin. But he qualifies this by warning that being in the limelight can be counter-productive. "It can damage your reputation and that of your clients."

Problems arise if you start to believe your own PR, says Aurelia Cecil, whose Aurelia PR firm represents upmarket brands. "In my view, if a PR is in the news it means they're involved in what's making the news and so are likely to be a good PR," she says. "Start acting like a superstar, however, and it's a disaster. Obviously it helps if people know you, but what matters is whether you're any good at what you do." Another risk is becoming the target of gossip and speculation. In the days following the resignation of Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, newspaper reports highlighted the relationship between the *New Statesman* (owned by Robinson) and its PR representative, Hobsbawn Macaulay Communications, co-run by Mr Brown's girlfriend. Cynics have already speculated on the effect that the link to royalty has on R-JH's business. A one-off project for *OK!* prompted suggestions that the company had struck a deal with the magazine to provide royal access. Not true, insists Harkin.

Nor has the royal connection been used to win clients. "While it has undoubtedly raised the profile of R-JH, at the end of the day people want a (PR) company that will deliver a quality service and successful results," says Harkin.

He admits that it's a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, the engagement has raised the profile of the company. On the other, to remain professionally credible R-JH must be cautious of exploiting it. "We've had a number of companies calling us since the engagement was announced, but we would be wary of working with those only interested in using us because of who she is," says Harkin. "It would be wrong to use Sophie's personal arrangements to promote their business."

Even so, Sophie Rhys-Jones's first-hand experience of being in the public eye provides R-JH with a unique selling point. "Sophie has been in the limelight five years now and this has given her probably the best training anyone could want in media relations," says Harkin. "In this sense, her involvement makes the company unique. We really know how to protect a brand."

Inevitably, her day-to-day role will change. While she remains chairman and co-owner (she holds a 60 per cent stake), there will be certain activities that she can no longer participate in — such as client photo calls. "If Sophie was to turn up now, all cameras would immediately switch to her," says Harkin. And she will have to become more cautious about which clients she is publicly seen to endorse.

Close to completing its second full year of trading, R-JH now has eight staff, 20 clients and an annual turnover of nearly £500,000. Harkin is quick to dismiss any comparison with "boutique-PR firms", who "simply arrange parties for posh people and posh brands". R-JH wants to be seen as a serious player providing a comprehensive, strategic PR service. Its success will depend partly on how it manages its own brand image.

Mirror keen on mother of all press mergers

It's a big story when a regional newspaper group that started as the owner of the *Liverpool Echo* attempts a merger with *The Mirror*, the second-biggest national daily. Although Trinity, Britain's biggest publisher of regional newspapers, walked away from negotiations with Mirror Group Newspapers again this week, both sides want the merger and talks may resume within weeks.

The Mirror Group says its board is united in pursuing the merger but objects to a valuation at less than its market price. It is also adamant that its own senior executives are needed to find the synergies that will make any merger worthwhile.

David Montgomery, MGN's chief executive, has indicated that he is prepared to give way to Philip Graf, Trinity's chief executive, to achieve a sensible deal. The Mirror chairman, Sir Victor Blank, would become chairman. Montgomery is said to be happy to play a diminished role but many expect him to depart from MGN a much richer man.

When and if a deal is agreed, it will be the biggest newspaper merger in British history, valuing the new group at £1.3 billion. Any deal will go to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and it will be at least another six months before it is cleared.

Brian MacArthur

A new Mirror-Trinity group would own nearly 150 titles selling more than 12 million newspapers a week, and would become the dominant newspaper publisher in many of Britain's major cities, including Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast as well as Newcastle, Liverpool, Coventry and Birmingham. One advantage for *The Mirror*, particularly during the football season, would be that it could use its new city sites to print more regional editions with up-to-the-minute news and comment.

Several rival regional publishers nevertheless wonder why Trinity finds a deal with *The Mirror* so tempting or even what *The Mirror* itself stands to gain. Newsquest, the third-biggest regional group, investigated an approach to MGN but decided against.

Just imagine, they say, what will happen while *The Mirror* waits six months for the MMC report. They quake at the havoc the marketeers of *The Sun* would wreak on *The Mirror* while it awaits the MMC's verdict, particularly when the position of Montgomery, an experienced hand at newspaper wars, may be in doubt.

Under Graf, Trinity has moved from fourth position to top dog in the regional newspaper league within four years. It now publishes 120 newspapers with a circulation of 8.4 million copies a week, narrowly outselling Lord Rothermere's Northcliffe Newspapers group. It went top of the league after buying Thomson Regional Newspapers for £327 million two years ago. It has earned its reputation by sticking to its last — the micro-management of highly profitable monopoly regional titles. Yet critics of Trinity have been surprised at how little direction has been given to the former Thomson titles and ask whether Trinity has the managerial skills required to run the very different industry of national newspapers.

Montgomery, an Ulsterman, entered the regional newspaper industry in 1996 when he bought the *Belfast Newsletter*. (Graf is also an Ulsterman and Trinity owns the rival and bigger *Belfast Telegraph*.) A year later Montgomery bought Midland Independent Newspapers, the publishers of the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, *The Birmingham Post*, *Coventry Evening Telegraph* and a string of weeklies, for £297 million. Mirror Group (Regional) Newspapers is now the fourth-biggest regional group.

Journalists on its Midlands papers say that there has been no editorial interference from London and that they have benefited significantly from *The Mirror's* technical expertise. MGN originally identified savings of £5 million at MIN — in fact, it has achieved £12 million. MIN makes a profit of about £30 million. Unlike Northcliffe, where the national and regional newspapers work apart, Montgomery's strategy has been to integrate the backroom functions of MGN's nationals and regionals and squeeze more profit from big savings in such areas as joint printing, production, advertising and marketing. One question in the merger talks has been how much more profit could be squeezed from Trinity's 120 titles. Trinity has put the savings at about £7 million. *The Mirror* believes that they could be £11 million — and even higher.

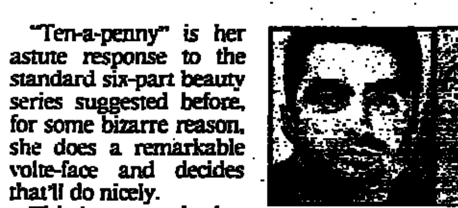
Another argument has been over whether the two companies should be valued by their stock market quotations — *Mirror* shares have fallen from a high of 248p last summer to around 172p — or by their profits — more than £100 million for MGN, against £71 million for Trinity.

The Mirror probably has the least to lose and the most to gain from a merger. Year-on-year its sales are up 3 per cent in a declining market and it would be the beneficiary of greater investment in editorial and marketing.

Insiders expect that both sides will try again to make a merger work. If two companies jointly making profits of £170 million can add another 10 to 12 per cent from synergies, said one, then it has to be attractive and a deal worth doing.



The biggest cringe in Fleet Street





HOW I regret my promise to keep you informed of agency switches and new ad campaigns in the newspaper sector. There's scarcely room to write about anything else. It means that I'm duty bound to inform you that the Advertising Standards Authority upheld the 140 complaints it received about an ad in *The Times* for *The Sunday Times Magazine* featuring a photograph of a woman in a leather bikini apparently nailed to a cross. The ASA decided, the ad was tasteless, provocative and blasphemous.

What's worse is that I now have to find something positive to write about the new *Express* campaign from its third agency in a year, St Luke's, the trendy advertising co-operative. I dislike the constant knocking of Rosie Boycott's much improved *Express* — there seems to be a vendetta against her — but you must call a spade a spade or, in this case, a turkey.

The "something positive" is that I saw the ad, and more than once at that. *The Express* has been consistently outspent on advertising by — in particular — its chief rival, the *Daily Mail*. But if Lord Hollick is prepared to stump up the cash, that's easily rectified.

The problem of being outmarketed is more difficult to crack, particularly if the personnel at both newspaper and ad agency keep changing. This latest attempt smacks of a naivety on both sides. It opens with a shot of the Blackfriars *Express* building glinting in the sunlight. We're told that *The Express* got a new Editor last year and see "her" storming through the building like the Pied Piper on speed, brushing the old crusader symbol aside and demanding to know what's in the paper from her health and beauty editor.

"Ten-a-penny" is her astute response to the standard six-part beauty series suggested before, for some bizarre reason, she does a remarkable volte-face and decides that'll do nicely.

This last scene is shot — unaccountably — through the crooked arm of the health and beauty editor. It's the kind of stuff you do when you first mess about with a camcorder, but you would be too embarrassed by its naffness to keep the footage. But then the whole ad is so crass that — like the Ferrero Rocher "Ambassador's party" — you find yourself waiting for the ironic punchline that never comes. If only it were a spoof.

It could have been better if it had featured Boycott, not a poorly cast actress. It could have been better without the shot of the *Express* crusader being barged aside — as if any potential *Express* readers have the faintest clue what the crusader is. And it most certainly could have been better if it hadn't been filmed with a degree of naffness that makes the paper look amateur.

Such promotional ads need not be works of creative genius to succeed — just look at the way Associated promoted "lucky wallets" last year. All they need to do is to tell you what's in the paper and encourage you to buy it. This commercial succeeds in the former, but it's difficult to imagine an ad that would less make you want to be seen buying the *Express*. It's cringe-making, particularly as the attempt to represent the atmosphere of the *Express* office falls flat in the knowledge that any editorial team thus humiliated would be hurling abuse at the Pied Piper and her friends.

Management at the *Mail* must have had a good chuckle, while *The Express's* dumped agency, Leo Burnett, will be bemused. *The Express* has much to commend it under Boycott, but nobody would guess from this. "Full speed ahead?" The naive leading the naive, more like.



"Rosie Boycott" storms through the *Express* newsroom in an advert that is shockingly naff

■ THE *Express* campaign is all very new Labour, of course, in the way that the spin is too obvious: we can all see the workings-out, the manipulation. It lacks the deftness of touch of the savvy Saatchi brothers at their best.

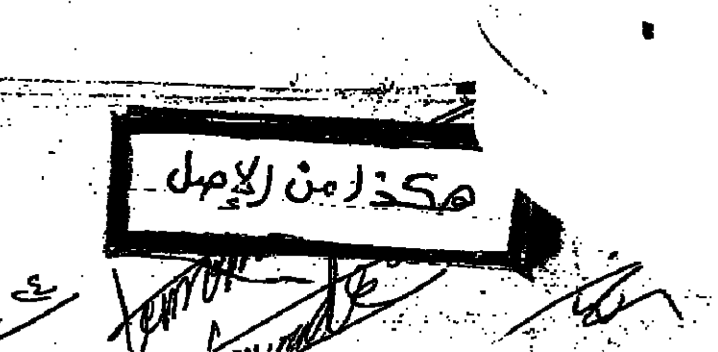
But St Luke's is rapidly supplanting BMP DDB, Labour's election winners, as the Government's preferred ad agency. In addition to *The Express*, there was last year's game attempt to get across the Government's New Deal policy, and this week the agency picked up the £6 million family tax credits account.

To date, the ever-so-earnest St Luke's has done its best work for the forces of good old-fashioned capitalism: Boots cosmetics, Ikea and Fox's biscuits. Let's hope the clients behind the family tax credits campaign are more streetwise than the agency: earnest advertising is a huge turn-off for the cynical great British public.

■ MOST desperate story of the week is the suggestion that Jeremy Irons and Peter Gabriel were involved with the millennium ad extravaganza only because they are new Labour supporters.

What rubbish. The politicians have obviously never met a luvvie commercials director. Try telling any of them that they had to use one of Tony's cronies and they would be on the phone in a jiffy to Mr Kaye's lighting cameraman, not Mr Blair's showbiz pals.

● *Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of* Campaign.



Mandelson, The Mirror and me

Jealous rivals can scribble what they like. I am enjoying the media limelight, says **Paul Routledge**

EVERY journalist ought to be turned over by his rivals once in a while. It is an entertaining, if sometimes scary, experience. And it makes you understand just how Joe Public feels when he is monstered by us.

Over the past four weeks I have scarcely been out of the papers, not because I write regularly for *The Mirror* but because I had the brazen cheek to write a revelatory biography of Peter Mandelson, the so-called *master of spin*.

In the end he couldn't talk himself out of trouble, so I hope I won't write myself into it. However, some right of reply is called for. First, the criticisms of Roy Greenslade, a leading member of the Former Editors' Union. Greenslade, who was briefly at the helm of *The Mirror* in the Thatcher-Major days, used his weekly column in the media pages of *The Guardian* to knock my paper's political coverage.

> Piers Morgan knows what he's talking about

He suggested that the Editor, Piers Morgan, had "no political finesse" while the political editor, Kevin Maguire, and I were "quite inadequate to the task" of covering politics. This is a bit rich, coming from a man who has travelled from Maoism to moderation. He admits that he was slavish in his devotion to Neil Kinnock, and argues that our task is explain to our readers "what the Government is trying to achieve".

No, thanks. We leave that to *The Sun*, whose regular contributor is that most prolific of freelances, Blair of Whitehall. It is not *The Mirror's* job to act as the mouthpiece of this (or any other) government. We support new Labour but we reserve the right to criticise. My bulging postbag tells me that this policy strikes a real chord among our traditional readership.

As for Piers and politics, let me say that I discuss politics with the Editor every day, sometimes several times. He knows what he's talking about. Contrast that with my long stint on *The Times* as labour editor. After I had worked for him for ten years, William Rees-Mogg introduced me to his wife as Michael Leapman. Most of the time, Piers and I agree. On the rare occasions that we do not, he runs a leader opposing my commentary. That is political maturity — not the grey uniformity of *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*.

Consider next the vapid outpourings of Derek Jameson, the former Editor of the *Daily Star*. Had he been my boss, I would have been out of the front door of Canary Wharf without my feet touching the ground. Have I got news for Del Boy. I work at Westminster (that's where the politics is, chump). He thinks that on the day I joined *The Mirror* last June, I should have given the paper the story of Mandelson's £373,000 loan. He does not know, of course, that my contract specifically excluded material from the book because I had a pre-existing, legally binding deal with my publisher. And if he does not believe that I would have sacrificed the story to save Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's press secretary, he knows nothing about comradeship.

This is all good knockabout stuff. Thirty years of working in "the street of broken dreams" have pretty well inured me to it. Much nastier is the poisonous bile in *The Guardian*, particularly its badly written diary. After years of tipping bucketloads of Kelvin all over Mandy, scribbler Matthew Norman and he have kissed and made up. So it is open season on Routledge, whether the crap they write is true or not.

I have never quite understood the animosity of *The Guardian* towards me. It was passed down from Peter Preston to Alan Rusbridger. Yet I was the first *Observer* journalist to sign the letter to Tiny Rowland begging him to sell the paper to *The Guardian*, not *The Independent* (which would have closed us down). I campaigned to secure that outcome, and welcomed it as a great day for British journalism. The new regime's response was to expel me from the parliamentary lobby and to demand that I take a £5,000 pay cut, or go. I took the money and ran, pausing only to break "Bastardgate", when John Major referred to three members of his Cabinet as bastards — the only decent political story they had that year.

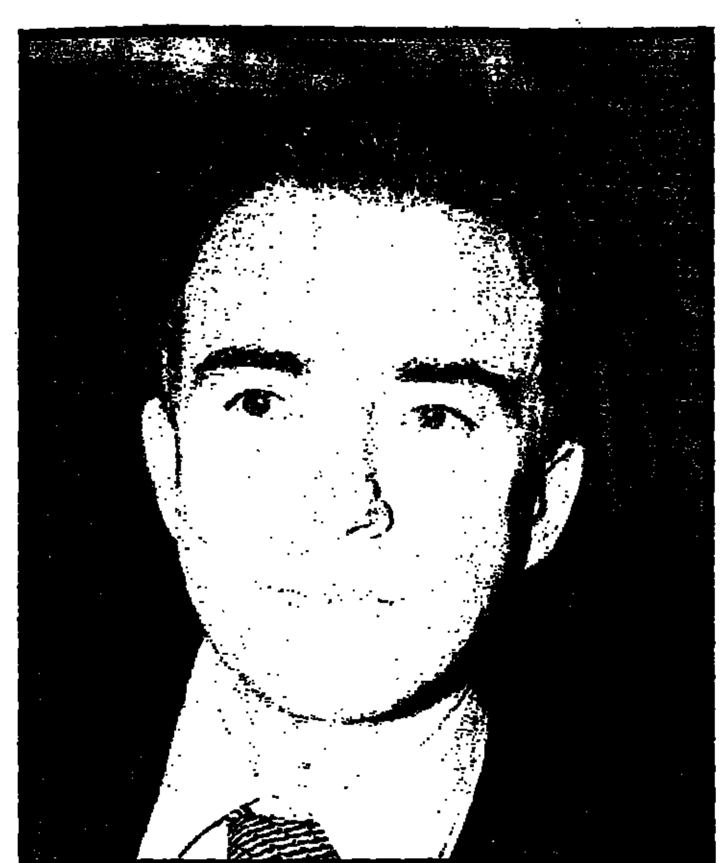
> Like Charlie Whelan, I have become the story

My real crime, I suppose, is that like Charlie Whelan, I have become the story. Media folklore decrees it A Very Bad Thing for journalists to be written about, on the ground that it diminishes their value to their employers.

But it cuts both ways. The publicity over Mandy, and the book serialisation, have made *The Mirror* the most talked-about paper of the season. And it would be idle to pretend that I do not enjoy the limelight. It will take more than the derision of the pygmies in Farringdon Road to upset me. The Mandy brouhaha has brought opportunities that I never expected: *Any Questions*, speaking at the Oxford Union, more telly than you can shake a stick at. The lobby joke runs: "What's the difference between Routledge and *Coronation Street*? *The Street* is on only four nights a week."

Eat your heart out, Mandy's media minions. I'm having fun.

● *The author is chief political commentator for* The Mirror.



Mighty fallen: Peter Mandelson paid a heavy price for his loan



A woman's right to fight with spite

Should a scorned wife hiss and tell? After going public about her own husband's infidelities, **Fiona Duff** has advice for the vengeful

I was enjoying an unexpected late lie-in last Monday morning when the telephone rang. It was Talk Radio asking if I would like to be interviewed on a programme to discuss Margaret Cook's book. I declined. A few moments later it rang back and asked if I knew Lady Graham-Moon's telephone number.

What could I have in common with a Home Counties lady who is probably 25 years older than me? However, I know that in every talk show research file in the country our names nestled together in the drawer marked "vengeful wives", and let no producer put us asunder.

I know of women who have carried out revenge much more hideous than chopping the sleeves off their errant husband's suits and giving away his wine collection. Goodness knows why she made it into the press. On the other hand, I was totally responsible for finding myself there.

In the autumn of 1997 you could hardly open a newspaper without some betrayed wife venting her spleen; Stevie Morgan was at it in *The Independent*, Della Bovey chose *The Mirror*, Margaret Cook was in *Scotland on Sunday* and I was sticking the boot in courtesy of the *Daily Mail*.

I was, to put it politely, jolly annoyed with my husband, who I discovered had taken to popping round to a young journalist's flat for a bit of slap and tickle. With two young children and more than four years since he had pledged his troth, I did try to make our marriage work, but later chucked him out when his aversion to the truth made me realise that he didn't care much for me. Writing about it seemed a damn fine way to not only give vent to my feelings but also to ensure that no one was left in any doubt about his pathetic behaviour.

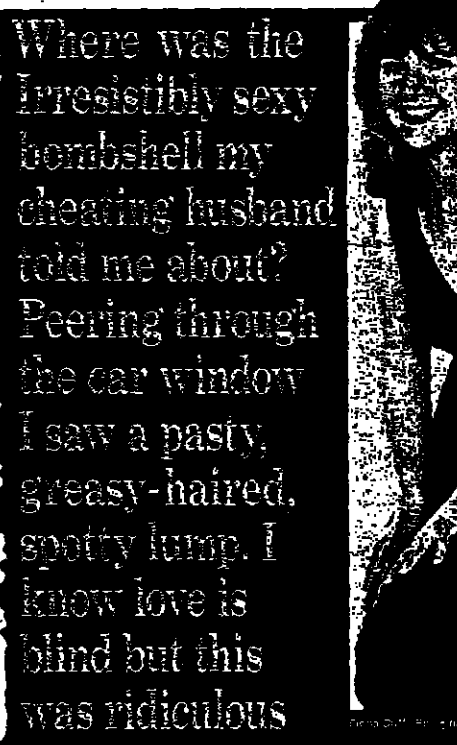
Two spreads in November were sharply followed by a weekly column, for which I received hundreds of letters from other betrayed wives. I never named either of them (I called *her* the trollop, though looking back this was a title more applicable to *he* than she), but from November that year everyone we knew took to grabbing the *Daily Mail* each Monday to mug up on the latest. It went under the title of *Diary of a Divorce*, but could easily have been called *Don't Expect a Phone Call, Here's How I Am This Week*.

According to Carol Sarler in *The Sunday Times*, it was "so corrosive and compulsive that reading it was like having a ringside seat at the worst, or best, of car crashes". I like to think that was a compliment, and if it wasn't I'll be round to give Ms Sarler a kicking.

Having been a publicist I knew what was coming. While I joked with a columnist from *The Guardian* responding to my diatribe that it was all tomorrow's fish and chip paper, that call from Talk Radio was neither the first nor the last time my thoughts on adultery have been requested.

It was also a time for the tables to be turned. For several years as an entertainment publicist, urging actors and performers to talk to the press and then often looking on aghast as columns dissected their every word, suddenly it was my name that was cropping up everywhere. Some said it was glorious, applauding my honesty, others said I would regret it; that revenge was a dish best served cold. In other words, I should have kept my gob shut, sharpened my scissors instead of my pencil and gone through his wardrobe.

My husband phoned to tell me gleefully that *Channel 5 News* had described me as "sad and bitter". Heck, not as sad as finding myself watching every news programme to see what they had to say. Regrets? Well, as Sinatra sang, I've had a few, but frankly Frank, too few to mention. I admit I was not in a totally sound state of mind when I decided to hiss and tell (as the *Express on Sunday* described it), but there was no point in splurging my emotions across pages and then expounding my grief by ruing the whole thing.





MIKE WILKINSON

Art of revenge: above right, Fiona Duff and her *Daily Mail* story

There are those whose opinions I care about, such as family and friends, but anyone else can take a running jump.

On the other hand, my mother, who has not read any of the *Daily Mail* articles, still swells with pride when she meets people who ask her to pass on their praise. I also had my own little set of principles. I didn't discuss our marriage prior to discovering my husband's affair and I never put myself about as anything special.

After Margaret exposed Robin Cook's disgraceful behaviour as a husband, my only question for her is, why on earth put up with it for so long? Would there not have been more pride in kicking out the philandering git rather than clinging to someone who seemed to care so little for your feelings? As for Della Bovey gatecrashing a party to dance in front of her husband in a new red dress while pronouncing herself an It Wife, well it didn't work for me. And it didn't work for her, because as she raised her champagne glass to the camera none of it could mask the fact that her husband preferred another. When he did return it wasn't to a new woman, merely the one he had left. She had tried to reinvent herself but, as Clive Sinclair could tell her, not all inventions work on a day-to-day basis. Journalists who cheered her on are now forming a queue to listen to Anthea (Turner) warble on about her great love — Grant Bovey, who went back to her after a few months with his wife.

Margaret Cook now faces trying to get on with her life. Anger has carried her over the past year, but it doesn't make an easy bedfellow. The problem with continually plotting a nice cold serving of revenge is that it doesn't leave you much time to do anything else.

Lady Graham-Moon raided her husband's wine cellar in the white heat of the moment. It made her feel good. A year later it wouldn't have quelled her fury.

Robin Cook has said not a word about the book, although his colleagues say that it is of little consequence. While we may wonder if Tony Blair is right to trust a man who can deceive his wife, he obviously does. Margaret's book will have perked up her bank account, but I reckon there were other reasons for writing it.

If her former husband carries on, happy with the woman who wrenched him from his family, trotting the globe as Foreign Secretary and in receipt of little or no opprobrium, will she be content?

If she continues her assaults via the media not only will we get bored, but she'll start to look foolish. Who knows if Margaret Cook will live to regret writing her account of her marriage. I have never met her, I don't know anyone who knows her and I have no right to suggest how she may feel in months or years to come. But she should remember that in the talk show file her name is now sitting just in front of mine.

Emap's Magic moment

A radio station has a new name and a new audience, finds **Raymond Snoddy**

The final transformation of Melody Radio in London into Magic 105.4 is marked today by the launch of a £3 million marketing and advertising campaign to boost the Magic brand nationally.

The Magic stations, owned by Emap, the magazine, radio and exhibitions group, are aimed mainly at 35 to 44-year-olds: listeners not yet ready to slip into Gold station nostalgia.

"Magic is going to be the second largest station in London, ahead of Heart, Capital Gold and Virgin," says Tim Schoonmaker, the American who runs Emap Radio and who has overseen the rebranding of Melody.

The station has already changed since Emap paid £25 million last March to buy an FM "shop window" in London. The first thing to go was all music from the 1950s.

"We wanted ears that came of age with the Beatles or later," says Schoonmaker, who notes that advertisers are less interested in the over-55s.

The Melody inheritance of playing relaxing music with little talk and no jingles had produced an audience approaching one million, but 60 per cent of them were older than 55. Just by changing the playlist, that proportion has fallen to 40 per cent and fresh listeners have been attracted to break the million barrier for the first time.

This week's morning shows featured music ranging from Wet Wet Wet and such staple "adult contemporary" artists as Simply Red and Phil Collins to Robbie Williams and Sinead O'Connor.

Listeners have been gradually weaned off the Melody name. For a while, the on-air identification was Melody, the Magic of London. Then it was London's Magic 105.4 Melody.

This week it has become plain Magic. "If you tell them 50 times a day, they start to get the message," says Schoonmaker, who sees the FM Magic station in London as the flagship of the mainly AM Magic network.

Magic is being developed as a network of nine stations, including stations in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, but will be "networked", as the Capital Group stations outside London increasingly are.

The aim, says Schoonmaker, is for each station to keep its local identity, complete with local news, rather than just broadcasting a common service from London.

The marketing campaign will feature some of the different styles of music that the stations broadcast, under the slogan As If By Magic. In the most recent official ratings, the Magic network reached 2.65 million listeners weekly, ahead of Talk Radio, the national speech station.

Magic is one of three distinct radio brands being developed by Emap. The others are Kiss, specialising in dance music, and the mainstream Big City FM stations.

The Magic campaign comes in a period of continuing growth for commercial radio. Display advertising (ie, major product advertising, mostly but not exclusively national) is likely to total £415 million, a year-on-year growth of 17 per cent. Radio is now taking a 5.4 per cent slice of total display advertising.

Although Magic in London will be very different from Melody, something of the old station's legacy will survive.

Schoonmaker promises that Magic will still be relaxing, there will be a minimum of chat and no aggressive promotional devices such as jingles.

Who wants to win the ratings war?

■ ITV's runaway success with *Who wants to be a Millionaire?* is causing the other channels to break out in a cold sweat. One rival director of programmes said to me: "Suddenly ITV is becoming a successful channel all over again. If it succeeds in reversing years of declining audience share, it will just go to show that the British television market is not at all the same as America's."

Another ITV director of programmes observed: "Perhaps the most significant thing in recent months will not be the launch of digital, but the revival of the TV quiz, with this straightforward format, after loads of spoofs."

A crumb of comfort for the BBC: *Holby City*, its new hospital drama which overlapped with *WWTBAM* on Tuesday, peaked at over nine million viewers.

■ I HEAR that the Channel 4 chairman Vanni Treves is lavishing tender loving care on his chief executive, Michael Jackson, as the hunt for the next Director-General of the BBC begins. The creative community is a bit sniffy, but Jackson is judged by his board to have performed splendidly in 1998. Its new Film on Four service has attracted 35,000 subscribers since its launch in December, well on target for its goal of 150,000 in a year.

Interestingly, the BBC's Board of Governors hopes to have the next Director-General installed by summer for a smooth handover. However, once Sir John Birt, a leading evangelist for digital, has gone, the 10 per cent of licence fee income earmarked for new services is likely to remain capped for a very long time.

■ FANCY being a moral guardian? Up to deciding when three-in-a-bed scenes offend? Lady Howe of Aberavon, chairman of the



Broadcasting Standards Commission, used a jolly party this week to confirm that she is stepping down in April, leaving Chris Smith, the Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, the happy task of finding a new Labour-type replacement. This strange Thatcherite remnant can't have much life left; the next chairman may well be a caretaker until the regulatory framework of television is shaken up. Still, at £46,000 a year there's bound to be a taker.

■ A SMARTING Carlton yesterday paid its record £2 million fine to the Independent Television Commission over its deceitful drugs documentary *The Connection*. The figure is double the sum it had expected. And executives are still reeling over the fierce condemnation from ITC members for betraying viewers.

However, Carlton's squeaky-clean Polly Bide, the former BBC editorial policy adviser recruited as controller of factual programmes, is planning to hire some very un-Carlton sounding history and science programme-makers to upgrade output.

It's a case of sweet revenge. Bide was one of the 1,200 seasoned TV professionals who were made redundant when Thames lost its franchise seven years ago to lightly staffed Carlton. Seen in the light of the recent quality drama hits *Cider with Rosie* and *Goodnight Mr Tom*, Carlton is clearly attempting a fresh start.

■ TALK Radio was well and truly "MacKenzied" this week as ten producers were sacked, boxing deals were unveiled and new presenters popped on air.

Last night the right-wing columnist Simon Heffer hosted the first of *The Big Issues*, Talk Radio's answer to Radio 4's *Any Questions?* and *Any Answers?* The executive producer hired by canny Kelvin is Carole Stone, who produced *Any Questions?* during the 1980s and subsequently used her legendary contacts book to develop a new career as a lobbyist, all underpinned by her famously well-attended Christmas party and weekly salons.

Stone has already secured Barbara Follett, Martin Bell and Sue Slipman for future programmes.

■ OVERHEARD at a party this week: "Doesn't Sir Christopher Bland (Chairman of the BBC) have a real problem with the rest of the governors? I heard that when he told them to raise a finger if they wanted to say something during meetings one member replied: 'Only one finger?'"

■ IT HAS been a joy to read *The Sun*'s "Would you sleep with Robin Cook?" coverage this week. After heavy-handed splashes such as "Dead parrot", "Foxtrot Oscar" and "Is this the most dangerous man in Britain?" this latest stunt found just the right blend of wit. I watched two people on the Tube turn to their *Suns* and laugh aloud.

media times

Is it just dirty talk for girls?

A new US comedy purports to be cool about sex, says **Tim Cornwell**

Oral sex, male genitalia and "toxic" bachelors are a constant topic of conversation in *Sex in the City*, a new American comedy series that is Channel 4's latest prize possession.

Based on the *New York Observer* column Sex and the City, in which writer Candace Bushnell chronicles her forays into the Manhattan singles scene, the show is written by Darren Star, the creator of *Beverly Hills 90210*. It takes girl power to the thirtysomething set.

The series, which was the only show to be bought by a British network at the LA screenings last May, was snapped up by Channel 4 — which was impressed to find an American programme where the characters talk openly about sex. It will begin here on February 3, screened immediately after *ER* on its return to Channel 4.

Sarah Jessica Parker stars as Carrie Bradshaw, the fictionalised Bushnell, a "sexual anthropologist" of New Yorkers' mating habits. Her character is backed by three friends, all unmarried career women, who go from the romantic to the nymphomaniac.

"Welcome to the age of uninnocence," Carrie intones in the opening episode, evoking a Manhattan where romance is dead. "Nobody has *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and no one has affairs to remember. Instead we have breakfast at 7am and affairs we try to forget as quickly as possible."

In the US, the series is shown on Home Box Office, a "premium" cable channel which has helped to precipitate the drop in viewing figures for the big US networks. HBO still relies on movie reruns, but has begun to produce its own award-winning films and series.

At the same time, HBO's status as an ad-free cable channel that is bought rather than broadcast allows it to push programming beyond the constraints of "family viewing".

"Sex provides the subtext of so many TV shows, especially sitcoms," says Star, citing *Seinfeld* as an example. "A lot of the humour comes from dancing around sex. There are lots of puerile jokes. This new series puts sex front and centre, throwing out the double entendre."

US reaction to *Sex and the City*, a show that strives to be clever and knowing about sex, has been mixed. At a time when the crop of new American television series has been markedly bad, it has been both praised and panned.

It is surprisingly low on steamy sex scenes, with plenty of grunting bedroom encounters but only the occasional flash of bare flesh. The raw table talk of oral sex and men's sexual apparatus makes up for it.

In a world of art gallery openings, exotic nightclubs and trendy restaurants, Carrie and her friends duel with and bed "toxic bachelors" and compulsive "modelisers", men who date only models.

Their chief lament is that while New York is full of great unmarried females, well-travelled and well-off career women, it is desperately short of a few good men.

Darren Star, who conceived, co-wrote and directed some episodes in the series, says he had never seen a sitcom that took the single woman's stance and allowed them to talk openly about sex. He used it as an opportunity to write about his own women friends, he says, and to produce a comedy that was not simply a jokey, smutty 30-minute show.

"There are women who come up to me and say 'I don't believe it, I don't buy it'," says Star. "I say to them, 'it's not your world, but I can guarantee you that this world exists, and that maybe there is an exaggerated truth, but there's a truth to it'."

HBO does not issue ratings figures, but Star says *Sex and the City* has outranked any other station in its time slot, and was performing better than a previous HBO hit, *The Larry Sanders Show*. Last October, citing reviews of the show as "fresh and funny", and "pop-culture savvy", HBO gave the green light for a second season of 16 episodes.

Star was starting as a film writer when Fox Television approached him in 1989 to write what was first called *Class of Beverly Hills*. Aided by the TV producer Aaron Spelling, he created *Beverly Hills 90210*, a show that was fake and funny and a huge hit.

He followed up with *Melrose Place*. His fortunes took a dive with *Central Park West*, a series set in the glitzy world of New York glamour magazines, which was cancelled. *Sex and the City* has the same campy, slightly surreal feel to it as *Beverly Hills 90210* and generated a favourable buzz in "the industry".

Men, Star admits, take a hammering in the series, where the only redeeming characters are Carrie's gay male confidant, Stanford Blatch, and a hopelessly wet romantic named Skipper.

"In the first season we definitely slammed the guys," says Star. "If there's one issue this year, it's that we are trying to make the women take a little bit more responsibility for their behaviour and their singleness. The guys are not simply assholes."

CRAIG BLANKENHORN/HBO



Sleeping with the enemy? Sarah Jessica Parker, the star of *Sex and the City*, just wants to talk

May the task force be with you

Raymond Snoddy

The government task force set up this week to look into the future of the BBC licence fee has managed to round up a cross-section of the usual suspects. No such body would be complete without the presence of Rabbi Julia Neuberger, the equally inevitable woman trade unionist — in this case, Helen Black of Unison — and a couple of peers of the realm, one Labour and one Tory. Then add Sir Alan Budd from the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, plus a twist of journalism in the shape of David Lipsey of *The Economist*.

Two members of the panel stand out as particularly interesting — the chairman Gavyn Davies, chief international economist of Goldman Sachs, and Lord Gordon, chairman of Scottish Radio Holdings, the commercial radio group.

The appointment of Davies as chairman attracted the inevitable "cronyism" headlines. He is indeed a friend of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and Sue Nye, his wife, is Brown's personal assistant. But Davies also has impressive credentials. Together with Andrew Graham, acting master of Balliol College, Oxford, and a director of Channel 4, Davies has already applied his mind to the problem of funding a public service broadcaster in an age of digital choice.

In 1997, the economists produced suggestions to raise more money for the BBC to counter what they thought would be the relative decline of income over time when compared with the opposition. One was setting a higher licence fee for digital, bringing in extra funds as more viewers made the switch. The second was to introduce a more expensive "site licence" for those with multiple television sets.

There are problems with both suggestions. A higher licence fee for digital would not exactly help to drive the new technology forward, and introducing a premium licence fee for those with more than one set — most of the population — would not be popular.

It will be interesting to see whether such thoughts will inform the work of the task force, which will mainly be looking at the extent to which the BBC can supplement the licence fee through commercial activity and whether better systems of concessionary licence fees can be devised for the elderly.

Perhaps the most important thing about the committee's terms of reference is that the principle of the licence fee is not in question. The Government has accepted that it will survive, at least until the BBC's Royal Charter runs out in 2006.

Not for the first time the BBC is getting its retaliation in early with the publication next week of a book of essays by academics and policymakers on "public purposes in broadcasting". Graham kicks off with the argument, surely undeniable, that in the new world of global communications, subscription television and the Internet, there is still a real need to support "public purposes" in broadcasting to ensure that consumers "buy" enough quality broadcasting.

The presence of Lord Gordon on the panel is interesting. As one of the pioneers of commercial broadcasting in the UK, he is all too aware of what it's like to try to compete with the publicly funded BBC. He will be in a good position to argue that a balance must be struck to between the BBC's public purpose and its commercial activities, and that other broadcasters should not be disadvantaged.

The man who founded Radio Clyde in Glasgow will be well up to the task.

Cold weather? Call on the homeless

Journalists love the homeless in winter, but are avoiding the real issues. **Carol Midgley** reports

THE first snowfall of winter normally spells two things for the media. Newspapers and news bulletins carry pictures of cars stuck in snowdrifts, and there is a sudden flurry of interest in the plight of the homeless.

Crisis, the homeless charity, receives 150 calls a week to its press office — a figure that is likely to rise as temperatures around Britain fall and snow starts to creep down from the Highlands.

For most picture editors, nothing sums up the scenario quite as nicely as a lone street beggar huddled beneath a blanket with a cardboard sign and a mongrel dog for company. But this portrayal by the media can be exasperating for those who work with the homeless and know that the reality is infinitely more complex.

Crisis believes that the public is becoming weary of tired images and hackneyed messages about homelessness, and feels that the awareness campaign needs to move on from the visual soundbite.

Neil Churchill, the marketing director for Crisis, says that homeless people have become so used to dealing with the media that they have started to speak in the kind of soundbites that they think the journalists want.

"To a degree, some journalists will set up a stereotypical image of homeless people," he says. "A large number of them are rough sleepers but that is not the whole picture. A TV crew will give them a blanket and tell them to sit under a bridge when they might be going back to a squat or a B&B or their friend's floor. But that still makes them homeless.

"A lot of homeless people are now sceptical about the media. Some, when they are asked a question by a journalist, will come out with a certain story because they think that is what they want to hear.

> 'Many homeless people are sceptical about the media'

"You have to really probe to get the true story of how they ended up on the streets, but most people don't have time because they have deadlines to meet.

"We need to project the individuality of people's circumstances and find a way to revitalise the issue.

"We need to reframe the issue of homelessness with a breakdown of community care leavers, alcohol and drug abusers, the unemployed.

"The documentary *Cathy Come Home* was a brilliant way of communicating it. It wasn't about soundbites. Shelter and Crisis were formed as a result of that programme." A recent *Inside Story* programme illustrated this point, he says. For weeks the crew followed a homeless youth and his mother in their separate lives.

"The burning question was why he didn't go back to live with his Mum," says Churchill. "He kept saying that there had been an 'irreconcilable breakdown' in their relationship, but he had run up a huge bill on his mother's catalogue and couldn't pay it. She was on income support but had to pay it herself.

"It was only because they had time to spend with him that they got to the root of it."

When Crisis opened its shelter's doors at Christmas, the intake was not purely street homeless. Guests, who were given Christmas dinner and gifts, ranged from people in hostels and B&B accommodation to pensioners in flats who would have otherwise spent Christmas alone.

"In many ways we have not managed to communicate the reality of homelessness journalistically," says Churchill.

"People still think homelessness is about shortage of housing when of course it isn't. It is a symptom of all kinds of problems that people are having.

"In the homeless sector, some of the messages that are being put out are a bit tired and old. There have been enormous changes in society but I see a lot of the same messages being put out from ten years ago, such as the case studies.

"There are the same old stereotypes, such as the care leaver or the young person beaten up by their parents. Of course that happens, but people have been hearing this for many years and there is a great deal of scepticism about it."

However, many of the foreign journalists who contact Crisis still regard the spectacle of the youth lying in a shop doorway as one of the defining images of modern Britain.

Now that the famous Bullring at Waterloo has become a multiplex cinema, the "blanket" is all that remains.

"About five years ago there were many more visual symbols of homelessness, such as the cardboard city at the Bullring and Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"But most of them have now gone. Journalists can't go down to cardboard city anymore. We get lots of calls from overseas about it. To many foreigners it is an enduring image of life in Britain."

This month, magazine writers, press and TV crews had called from Uganda, Hong Kong, New Zealand and most European countries.

"The message in the New Zealand article was: if you think you've got it bad here, look what it's like in the UK," says Churchill.

"They see it as a way of illustrating how Britain has declined. Through the summer, homelessness is not really a big issue for the media. People's attention drifts to other issues. When the temperatures drop, the interest hots up again."

Crisis is now planning new research, entitled *Homeless Voices*, which will involve talking to hundreds of people and recording their views. The aim is to make it an honest, detailed account of what the homeless are thinking without resorting to ready-made headlines.

Crisis is also planning an awareness campaign for the end of the millennium.

"The millennium is a good thing for us to focus on," says Churchill. "If you think about it, just over the river from the Dome there is an entire section of society that is totally excluded from the celebrations."

● *Crisis donation line: 0800-038 4838*

CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE



A lot of homeless people simply tell journalists what they think they want to hear

Let's get down to a little business, Chris

Eileen Gallagher, the new MD at Ginger Productions, has some big television ideas for Evans. **Raymond Snoddy** reports

In her first year as a junior press officer at Scottish Television, Eileen Gallagher prepared very carefully for the ITV company's Christmas dance. She had virtually all her black hair cut off, apart from a narrow strip down the middle of her head, which she dyed blonde.

"By the end of the evening there was not a person in Scottish Television who did not know who Eileen Gallagher was," an admiring former Scottish executive recalls.

Being noticed in the right place at the right time, combined with being good at her job, led to an almost effortless rise in commercial television for the argumentative daughter of a Glasgow lawyer.

In her twenties she was responsible for commissioning and scheduling children's programmes on the ITV network, by 30 she was director of programmes at Scottish and then, in 1996, she was appointed managing director of London Weekend Television.

Within two years she had passed through the world of big broadcaster corporate ambition and decided to join the rag-tag army of independent producers.

"I wanted to create something for myself. I was slightly resistant to waiting for the next step up the corporate ladder. You don't really grow attending a lot of corporate meetings that take up a lot of time and have to be done," says Gallagher, 38, who set up Shed Productions with close friends Ann McManus, a former *Coronation Street* script editor, and Brian Park, a *Street* producer. Their first production, *The Jailbirds*, a ten-part drama on life in a female prison, launches on ITV in May.

And then the phone rang. A headhunter was looking for someone to run the television interests of Chris Evans, the broadcaster, and his Ginger Media Group.

"The last thing I was looking for was a full-time job. This is probably the only thing that could have tempted me out of my plans for 1999. It is a very exciting young company, full of enthusiasm," says Gallagher, who has just started. She takes over from Michael Foster, the once close Evans associate who left last year.

Apart from the long-running Chris Evans series *TFI Friday* on Channel 4, there is also the Evans breakfast show on Virgin Radio, televised on Sky. Her main job as managing director of Ginger Television Productions will be to develop Ginger programmes that go beyond "one of the company's biggest assets" — Chris Evans himself. It is a transition that the company has so far been slow to make.

"I met him (Evans) and he was hugely driven, very keen that the business is developed and very, very businesslike. He has real views on how the business is to grow and is very serious about it," says Gallagher. Like many others, she has noticed that Evans has been a lot more focused since he put his own money into the Ginger Media Group, a corporate vehicle created to combine Ginger Productions and Virgin Radio, in a £85 million deal.

She has watched *TFI Friday* on television but received a very different perspective watching last week's show going out. "Chris was not just there to present. Throughout, he was looking at the creative elements and checking the camera shots. When things went wrong he turned it to the advantage of the programme," says Gallagher. Early ratings figures for last Friday suggest that the show had an audience of 1.6 million at 6pm and 700,000 at 11.30pm, though the average is usually about three million.

Gallagher believes that Ginger is fizzing with ideas — some of them off the wall. "My job is to focus efforts on those jobs that are going to be significant for the company."

Gallagher believes that a programme proposal must have certain key ingredients to succeed. It must be a "hot idea with an original twist" and have production staff with the ability to turn the idea into reality. The producers must also have the on-screen talent to take the show to the top of the commissioner's list.

"Without at least two of those three elements, you might be lucky, you might not be lucky, but I don't think you are serious as a production company," says Gallagher, who relaxes by writing television scripts.

Ginger has a couple of new projects in the pipeline with a number of other "completely cracking ones" under development. One is *Weddings*, a series produced by the *TFI Friday* team, that will be shown on BBC1. It will go behind the scenes at a different wedding each week, showing the dramas and crises.

Another is a possible television series to be spun off from the successful British film *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, which has made Vinnie Jones famous for more than football. Gallagher says that Ginger has agreement on the rights with Ska, the film producers, and talks are under way with broadcasters. The aim is not just to get such ideas on the screen but to create several long-lasting brands. Building up equity and rights is Eileen Gallagher's approach, whether at Ginger or Shed, where the company took out a £5 million loan to fund *The Jailbirds* so that it could keep both the overseas rights and its secondary rights in the UK when the ITV showings of the series are over.

Gallagher also recently became a non-executive director of Britt Allcroft, the children's television production company that has concentrated for some time on building up television and merchandising rights.

"The really interesting thing is that I am a director of three very different independents all interested in owning rights and creating equity," says Gallagher.

If she ever gets tired of the often frustrating life of an independent, even at the plusher end of the market, or if Evans should eventually become exasperating, there is little doubt that Gallagher could re-enter mainstream broadcasting.

Steve Morrison, the chief executive of Granada Media, is proud of the fact that he had "the good sense" to bring Gallagher to London from Scotland. "She is a terrific television executive — fearless, decisive, happy with big tasks and with the drive and determination to carry them out. She would always be welcome at Granada."

DENZIL McNEELANCE



Eileen Gallagher is looking for "hot ideas with an original twist" to turn into TV hits

PR firm to give guides a new image



THE *Guides are to hire a* public relations agency to modernise their image, says **PR Week**. Several agencies were interviewed this week and Susan Kay-Williams, the Guide Association's new head of marketing and external relations, expects to announce an appointment by March. It will be the first time that the Guides have used an external PR agency. Kay-Williams says the organisation is burdened by its "mythical 1950s/1960s image" and needs to target nine-year-old girls — the potential Guides themselves — rather than their parents. "The issue is repositioning the brand," she says.

■ ITV IS threatening to remove the ITN brand name from the 6.30pm news bulletin that will replace *News at Ten* in March, **Broadcast** reports. ITN executives are fighting against the move, which would lower their company's profile at a time of fierce competition in the supply of broadcast news to commercial stations.

ITN makes bulletins for Channels 4 and 5 as well as for the main ITV channel, but its logo appears only on *News at Ten*. ITV wants its new *Evening News* to be identified more closely with the channel than with the news provider.

■ THE FTSE International stock market index is to spend £3 million on a marketing campaign aimed at securing its position as one of the world's leading indices. Jonathan Horton, the sales and marketing director, has told **Marketing**: "Following the introduction of the euro it has become a battleground ... In three years' time there will be only three major indices, and we intend to be one of them." FTSE, jointly owned by the London Stock Exchange and the *Financial Times*, will spend £2 million on advertising and £1 million on direct marketing.

■ THOUSANDS of new automatic cash machines will soon be appearing in convenience stores, fast-food outlets and cinemas, according to **Marketing Week**. The machines, provided by the Euronet network, will recognise all bankcards — but users will be charged £1 for every withdrawal. At present bank cash machines are sited only at the banks themselves or at locations such as supermarkets that can guarantee a high level of usage.

■ A CAMPAIGN of cinema commercials to boost William Hague's image is being planned by the Conservative Party. **Campaign** says the ads will be screened in the run-up to the elections for the Scottish and Welsh assemblies in May and the European elections in June. Tory strategists think the cinema is an under-used medium for political messages, especially in promoting personalities. A parallel press campaign will focus on local papers.

■ THE Mirror Group has appointed a media consultancy to advise on the delayed relaunch of *Sporting Life* as a general sports daily. The news, revealed in **Campaign**, will dampen speculation that the relaunch, originally scheduled for last October, will never happen. Fresh market research has been commissioned and a final decision is expected next month.

■ THE Alliance of Black Media Professionals has launched a campaign to "remove the ghettoisation of black programmes" on the BBC, **Broadcast** reports. The Alliance, whose members include the Labour MP Bernie Grant, has written to the Director-General, Sir John Birt, asking for ethnic programming to be spread across all BBC departments — including drama, education and current affairs — rather than being concentrated in a single African Caribbean unit with an "inadequate" budget.

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

A NEW *face is about to appear in the play*ground that is the men's lifestyle magazine market. The newcomer, *Boys Toys*, from Freestyle Publications, is described as a men's lifestyle magazine looking at "gadgets and real-life situations".

The new title, to be launched next month, arrives in what could be regarded as a saturated market, led by such titles as *FHM* and *Loaded*, with circulations towering well above those of even their closest rivals (see table).

Boys Toys could be in for a rocky ride if the fate of two recent launches is anything to go by. Dennis Publishing's *Stuff* closed after failing to meet circulation targets, as did *Deluxe*, published by Wagadon.

David Woods, head of marketing at *Boys Toys*, says optimistically that the closure of *Stuff* eliminates any obvious competition from the areas on which the new title focuses.

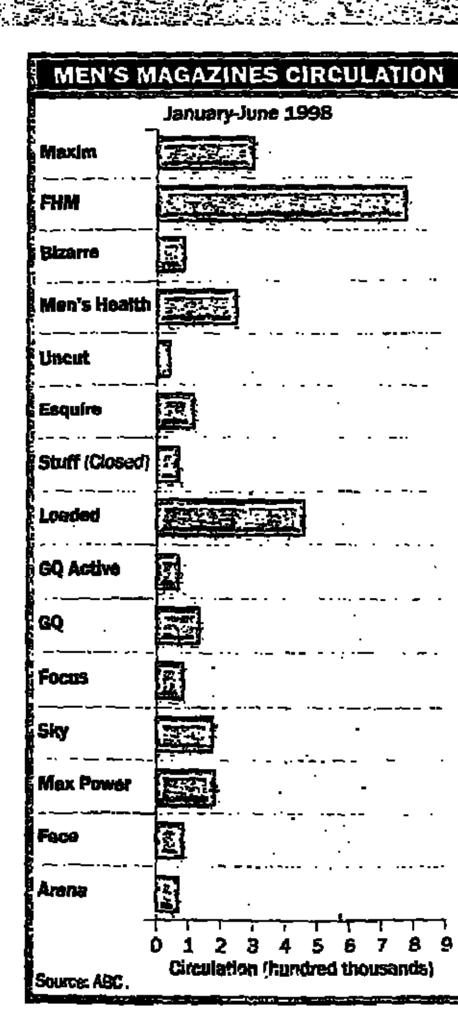
Stuff's lack of success does raise the question of how active the "lifestyle and gadget" market is, but Woods says that the *Boys Toys'* editorial will be less "bitty" than *Stuff*'s.

He also points out that the magazine has taken a step away from the prevalent "laddism" style of editorial in favour of a more mature, journalistic one.

The defunct *Deluxe* also claimed to be maturing the lads' market. After its closure, a staffer at Wagadon said that the market was clearly not open to a magazine that did not primarily focus on "babes".

The editorial of *Boys Toys* bears some resemblance to both of these titles, but maybe it can benefit from their mistakes.

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THE TIMES
EDUCATION

Turning the first page

When is it best to buy books for babies, asks **Virginia Matthews**

By next year, every baby in Britain will be given a free book by his or her health visitor as part of the seven to nine-month health check — a sign that the Government believes reading to be as important to growing minds as vitamins are to growing bodies.

The books scheme backs up a host of literacy initiatives stemming from the National Year of Reading — among them the current Books for Babies television ad campaign — which reflect the belief that an early appreciation of books not only gives children a head start at school, but instils a lifelong love of reading.

Yet there are questions. While experts argue over the correct age at which to introduce babies to books — the orthodox view is that babies' eyes cannot focus properly on a page until they are four or five months old — others say that infants as young as six weeks should be given board or bath books. Cynical parents might be forgiven for wondering whether the Books for Babies initiative is little more than a marketing exercise dreamt up by publishing houses, particularly as young children are likely to shred books, however much they appreciate bright colours and rhymes.

In 1997 British consumers spent £150 million on books such as *Dogger*, *Kipper*, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* for the nought to five age group, according to Book Marketing Ltd, the research organisation. Last year saw a rise in the number of children's books purchased, with slightly more than average growth in the nought to five sector.

Not all the titles are bought by parents — nearly half are bought by grandparents or aunts and uncles — and not all are made of paper; more than a fifth of books bought for under-twos are made of foam, board or fabric.

While most parents and grandparents agree that books are a good thing, there is concern that an early introduction to books could be counter-productive if ambitious parents put pressure on very young children into learning to read.

Our entire approach to early years learning has been under scrutiny lately, with educationists in other parts of Europe arguing that the UK's less-than-glowing school results are because we send our children to school too young and make the timetable too rigid.

According to Wendy Cooling, the consultant to the Bookstart early years reading scheme run by libraries and health centres, it is important to distinguish between the enjoyment of books for their own sake and teaching young children to read. "Although there is already some persuasive evidence to suggest that early experience of books gives children a head start at school, we certainly don't want to make the whole thing into a competition to see whose children can learn to read the earliest," she says. "The competition that awaits children at school is already difficult enough, without bringing it into the nursery as well."

For the parent faced with buying books for a young child, the choice can be bewildering, says Shirley Hughes, a leading children's writer. "I don't care for books that offer squeaky toys as an inducement to buy them, but I would always tell parents to be guided by their children's taste rather than their own. It is important that parents also remember to use libraries for tried-and-tested books, as well as the beautifully presented displays in bookshops."

While Ms Hughes believes that today's computer-literate children are more demanding with regard to illustrations than any previous generation, she also believes that some perennial storylines continue to span the generations. "I get my ideas by lurking about playgrounds and sandpits with my sketchbook, eavesdropping on children's conversations," she says. "It appears to me that the joys and dramas of family life as seen through the eyes of a three-year-old have not changed much in 40 years, despite the fact that children are bombarded with visual information nowadays."

Ian Craig, the head of publishing at Random House Children's Books, says that whether the book given to a child is in lift-flap or pull-tab format, or whether it marks a tie-up with a television series, hardly matters. "When children are really small, they'll chew books, drown them or use them as Frisbees — it doesn't matter, as long as they are learning how books work. Parents and small children should enjoy books together for the sheer fun of it."



Children of the computer age ask more from book illustrations than earlier generations

Why English is a creative-free zone

A lack of imaginative writing is stunting children's ability to express themselves, says **Fred Redwood**

Fourteen-year-old Hilary Fraser is reading her account of the morning she heard that her grandfather had died . . . "He wasn't ill. He was building me a swing. It was going to be a lovely swing. Not a plastic and metal one; a real old-fashioned wooden swing . . ."

At Charney Manor near Wantage in Oxfordshire, Linda Newbery, a teacher, runs intensive two-day courses three times a year for her pupils at Wheatley Park School, Oxford, to compensate for a large gap in the English curriculum: its failure to reward pupils for their personal writing.

The criticism is based on hard evidence. English teachers have to give progressively more time to new curriculum requirements, including an array of communication skills. At GCSE, 15 per cent of the mark is for transactional writing: constructing formal reports or newspaper-type articles. Twenty per cent is for speaking ability. Yet personal writing, often a strength of the most talented, receives only 5 per cent of the marks.

Ms Newbery says: "English teaching is turning into a one-size-fits-all series of modules that must be rushed through. So the more able and enthusiastic receive little stimulation. I have known talented young people put their writing on hold until they finish their GCSEs because their enthusiasm has been dimmed by the work in class."

At Charney Manor the work is far from mechanical. Children disappear to various parts of the 16th-century house to work alone for spells of an hour. Then they return to discuss what they have written and ideas are thrown about with abandon: "Think about your favourite word — and take it from there . . ."

For young writers, Linda Newbery is the ideal teacher. A published writer, she has won two nominations for the Carnegie Prize for Children's Fiction. Her courses, run during term-time, have brought several successes: about six pupils a year win certificates in a national writing competition and the standard of the school's entries is always commended. Hilary Fraser was one of the finalists in a writing competition run by *The Times Educational Supplement* and the National Association for the Teachers of English.

> 'School lessons are too rigid. Here you can stretch yourself and experiment with ideas'

So what does Charney Manor offer that school-based English courses do not? Many children on the course complain that in a mixed-ability classroom they feel self-conscious about their work. They also share a love of writing. One pupil said: "Lessons are too rigid. Here, you can stretch yourself and experiment with words and ideas."

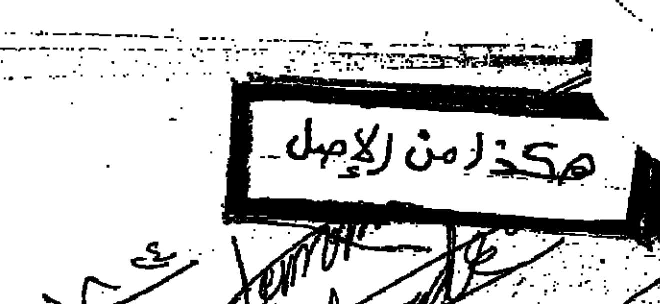
Anna Organ, 12, makes a more fundamental criticism of her experience of learning English. "This is the first time for years that I have had the opportunity to use my imagination," she says. "In primary school, all the emphasis was on boring exercise work."

Peter Thomas, a lecturer at the Institute of Learning at Hull University and a principal examiner for the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, says: "Teachers now have to squeeze two subjects, English and English literature, into the time normally given to one. As a result, they have to dash through the syllabus, without time for each child. Great emphasis is given to presentation and accuracy in English now, which admittedly is important. But provision should also be made for the able and committed children who can already use language skilfully."

Just before his death, the poet Ted Hughes, who judged creative writing competitions for more than 20 years, expressed his concerns over the quality of children's writing. "To judge by the material we are getting," he said, "we are raising a boring generation, shallow, dull and alienated, and this will find expression not only in literature, but in the emotional life of these children when they grow up."

They are not accusations that could be applied to Hilary Fraser, as she finishes reading her memories of Grandfather. "It was going to be normal-coloured wood and normal-coloured rope, too. It was going to be ready by spring, so we could fly in the sweet-smelling blossom. And we'd promised not to fight over the swing. But now the swing wasn't going to be there."

Could that have been just as easily written as part of Hilary's work towards her key stage three national curriculum tests? Probably not.



‘We welcome strong radical ideas’

The second round of bidding for education action zones begins today. **David Blunkett** explains what standards the Government hopes to achieve

When we launched our programme of education action zones last year, we had many innovative and challenging proposals to raise standards of achievement. Inevitably, however, some of those with the most radical ideas wanted to wait to see whether the zones would become a reality before submitting their bids. Today offers that chance.

The first 25 zones are now up and running. Some, such as Blackburn with Darwen, are offering a fresh insight into the potential of information and communications technology. This zone is making imaginative use of whiteboards, linking schools with home, business and the wider community. In East Basildon, the potential of new technology to tackle disaffection is being explored in the school-led partnership. Newham is seeking to pioneer new ways of paying teachers based on performance and is providing a radical extension of classroom assistants — both of which will help to inform progress on our Green Paper.

In Newcastle, the problem of 14 and 15-year-olds who habitually truant is being radically explored through curricular changes aimed at getting otherwise disaffected youngsters back into the classroom. Grimsby is taking children out of the school system temporarily to give them life skills. They are developing self-esteem, confidence, initiative and discipline on expeditions and programmes.

Projects in other zones include extending the school day and year for clubs, Saturday classes, summer schools, breakfast clubs and study centres. Croydon is investigating a four or five-term year, while in Middlesbrough, Tees South Employment Zone is providing support staff for action zone schools from its unemployed clients. It aims to train them to work as teaching assistants, IT staff, caretakers and community development workers, leaving them well-placed to secure permanent employment at the school elsewhere.

> One in seven secondaries will have a specialism by 2002

Business is involved in all the zones. Together, they have raised £5 million in business sponsorship, most of the £6.5 million they are expected to raise in their first year. The Halifax Bank is providing strong leadership in the Calderdale zone and it is the same in Wigan with the managing director of North West Water in the chair; in Lambeth Shell is chairing the zone and is looking at fresh ways to attract and retain the best teachers.

Education action zones are both an important part of our drive to raise school standards and our programme to promote diversity in education. Last week I made clear to local education authorities that where they failed to deliver key functions, I would use my powers to bring in alternative providers, including those from the private sector. We are rapidly expanding the programme of specialist schools, so that at least one in seven secondaries will have a specialism by 2002. At the same time, we are giving schools greater control of their budgets so that heads and governors will decide who provides their school meals or repairs their roof.

Generally, the areas chosen reflect both significant educational underachievement and significant deprivation in the local community. Most are urban, but some are rural.

With the announcement of a second bidding round today, we are making it easier for innovative bids to be developed. A concern of first-round bidders was that there was a need for some “seed funding” to help to develop particularly ground-breaking bids. From the most promising applications, we will provide up to £20,000 each to turn them into innovative ways forward. I believe that this will particularly help applications from schools, parent and community groups and businesses. It is important that plans are shaped with the help of those who are affected — heads, teachers, parents and pupils. We will be advertising in the press to encourage such bids as well as more traditional proposals from partnerships led by education authorities.

Among the ideas that could be explored further might be new ways of meeting the needs of gifted children, modernising the classroom and using new technologies; developing models of school management and governance, perhaps through federating schools; developing the curriculum so that it meets the needs of every pupil; or providing effective links between schools, health and social services. We also require action zones to set targets for improvement; better results in literacy, numeracy and GCSEs; an increase in the opportunities available to pupils; the number of pupils going into further education boosted; and an increase in attendance with a marked reduction in exclusions.

For the most part, education action zones will involve partnerships, regardless of who is in the lead. But the potential for radical ideas is strong. Zones will have access to up to £1 million a year each for at least three years.

I hope that all those who have an interest in improving education will consider the potential of education action zones to achieve their goals of raising standards and play their part in developing the next phase of the programme.

PETER NICHOLLS



The Prime Minister and his Education Secretary are keen to promote diversity

Top of the G7 class: Britain leads the computer race

Amid constant talk of failure, it is a relief to find something in which British education leads the world. A report this week placed Britain ahead of the other Group of Seven (G7) industrialised nations for the provision of information and communications technology (ICT — computers to the layman) in schools.

Research by the Advisory Unit for Computers in Education showed Britain to be the only G7 member to have a computer in every school, the only country to require ICT to be used by primary as well as secondary pupils, and to insist on its use across the whole range of subjects. Our schools also outstripped the rest in their use of multimedia systems.

The report, commissioned by Research Machines as a follow-up to a similar exercise conducted two years ago, was not all good news, however. Because they were pioneers of the technological revolution, British schools had more computers than most (almost 40 per cent) that were at least five years old. But the research showed rapid progress since the previous study, with the proportion of schools using the Internet rising from less than a third to three quarters.

The record is a proud one, but is it worth the expense? The report was published at the BETT exhibition, in London, the world's largest educational technology show. After marking the official opening with effusive praise for Britain's performance, Charles Clarke, the Minister for Schools, admitted that there was limited evidence that ICT raised levels of achievement.

John O'Leary

Tony Blair declared long before the election that technology would be at the heart of Labour's standards crusade. Party conference promises to enlist the help of the private sector to wire up every school were criticised as political gimmickry, but his enthusiasm has carried over into government. Mr Clarke confided that Mr Blair had asked him to focus particularly on the area when he appointed him last summer.

In the circumstances, the Government's multimillion-pound investment in the National Grid for Learning represents an enormous act of faith. There is anecdotal evidence from individual schools of the beneficial impact of ICT and some small-scale research, but it is hardly conclusive.

The report by Research Machines proves nothing about the effectiveness of ICT as a teaching medium. Singapore, which excels in international comparisons of test results, shares top billing with the UK. But the United States, which usually registers mediocre scores, is also a heavy user of ICT in schools. There is little obvious link between the best-provided and highest-achieving countries, but these are early days for the high-tech classroom.

The BETT show was full of products claiming spectacular advances. The Future School system, for example, which teaches numeracy through a CD-Rom, is said to have doubled the test scores of primary school pupils in 90 days. An independent consultant's report on the system found that children's concentration levels improved dramatically, motivation increased and some who did not like mathematics changed their attitude.

Traditionalists often scoff at the claims made for ICT in education, seeing it as an expensive distraction from the tried and tested media of books and personal instruction. But the critics tend to be those who are least comfortable with the new technologies themselves. They have only to visit schools that are making full use of ICT to see the motivating effects on pupils of all abilities.

The same goes for home use: online encyclopaedias and Internet sites can enliven the dullest homework and a good revision package may hook the most reluctant student. Indeed, the normally taciturn spokesman for the examination boards attributed some of last year's improvement in public examination results to such aids.

Mr Clarke made the pertinent point in his BETT speech that the two markets must converge if ICT is to have the maximum possible impact on education: “Ninety-five per cent of parents want to help their children, but don't know how best to do it. What you can buy in your local Virgin superstore and what goes on in schools must be more closely related.”

With the education marketplace growing rapidly, there will be no shortage of products. Established firms such as Compaq have announced their intention to enter the fray, while other big players such as Microsoft are already deeply involved. Even some of the games manufacturers appear to have decided that they need an educational string to their bow.

Schools will remain the prime movers, however, not least in an advisory role for parents, who may be even more baffled as the variety of software increases. The trouble is that every report on the subject — including Research Machines' — says that teachers, particularly at primary level, lack confidence in using ICT.

The Government's solution to this problem is a national training scheme for all teachers, but there are fears that this could put the cart before the horse by concentrating on how to integrate the computer into everyday lessons, rather than the basics of how to use the machines. Only when teachers are sufficiently sure of their ground not to fear being outsmarted by their technologically precocious pupils will they really see what they can do with computers.

Even then, there will be difficult issues to address. Mr Clarke acknowledged, for example, the danger of an “underclass” developing among pupils who do not have computers at home. The wider the spread of home computers, the more important it will become for schools to make their own equipment available to the “have nots” in the evenings and at weekends.

Technology cannot compensate for bad teaching and may have little part to play in the early years of school. But familiarity with computers has become essential in higher education and in a growing swath of employment. Enthusiasts may exaggerate the benefits of the technological revolution in education, but schools cannot ignore it.

Quite early in the next century it is likely that laptops will replace exercise books in many schools. Self-teaching packages will become commonplace in the classroom and the home. British schools are in pole position to take advantage of the opportunities that are developing, and perhaps even to dispel some of the gloom over other aspects of their performance.

From Eton to a church school out in Africa

Tanzanian pupils cannot wait to get to school — even at 7am. Report by **John Lewis**

There is an element of folly about any busman's holiday. Last Easter my April Fool's Day began with a school assembly and the formal raising of flags. I stood next to a headmaster and his deputy, facing 180 schoolchildren in their uniformed files as the flags of Tanzania and the diocese of Central Tanganyika were raised to the accompaniment of the national anthem.

Plain speech followed. The deputy head emphasised the need for all pupils to pay at least a minimum instalment of the term's fees. The week before he had sent 50 home with return conditional on the payment of 10,000 shillings (about £10). There were brief references to those familiar school topics of tidy dress and punctuality, either of them in this setting a miracle, arrival from surrounding villages for roll call at 7am sharp, somehow contrived in a world largely without timepieces.

A solution to the challenge of ensuring that the school day runs to time had been found the previous evening, when the head negotiated with an itinerant trader the purchase of watches for the two pupils whose task it was to ring the bells. The last message before we left the parade was the deputy's private update for the head: the head boy, then in the regional hospital suffering from an unknown illness, was thought unlikely to survive.

Mvumi village is an hour by dirt road from Dodoma, raised to the status of legislative capital by the former President Nyerere because of its central position. Mvumi Secondary School is run by the Anglican diocese. Its head, one of three expatriates among the staff of 14, is Richard Morris. He began at Mvumi in 1996 after eight years as headmaster of an independent school in New Zealand. Children in the Mvumi district, as in the rest of Tanzania, are entitled to seven years' primary education from the age of seven to 14 or 15.

RICHARD MORRIS



Pupils at Mvumi Secondary School take their examinations in the village church



The head teacher believes that wearing a uniform helps the pupils to form a strong bond

Instruction in Swahili (as opposed to tribal languages) has proved an important exercise in nation-building. Primary schooling, once free, now incurs a modest annual charge, but families' economic circumstances often mean that children are kept more usefully (at least, in the parents' eyes) at home.

What is difficult is making the jump from primary to secondary. The opportunity is available only to those who make the grade, and it costs £30 a year in government secondary schools in a setting where the official minimum wage is £30 a month and the cost of treatment in a rural hospital is £1 a day.

At Mvumi Secondary School, the diocese charges £100 a year to cover costs, a sum that families find hard to pay. Most depend on smallholdings of two to four acres on which they grow maize, millet, potatoes or groundnuts, or on small herds of cattle and goats.

The boys and girls attend Mvumi for four years. Instruction is in English (as throughout Tanzania at secondary level); Swahili is a special subject. Form 4 students (mostly aged 18) will take the national examination at the end of the year. Further progress is determined by results and readiness to pay.

> Questions arise about the contribution of imperialism and independence

Progress at secondary level is bound to be gritty and determined; English is the second (or third) language for pupils and for most teachers. Resources are few. The students own no textbooks, and the school's library is for reference only. Homework is often done over a smoking kerosene wick in a hut.

Mr Morris has to rely chiefly on his New Zealand school and church connections for things outside his operating budget. Such sources have funded a new laboratory. Materials in the staffroom are subject to destruction by termites or rain. But the biggest challenge is raising money for a boarding house for girls. Many of the students have to find accommodation with relatives or strangers in Mvumi.

Provision of good water in the villages is also a prime concern. The British-based charity Water Aid has its local HQ in Dodoma. During a tour by Water Aid Land Rover, I gained an idea of what can be achieved: by providing pumps, tanks and pipes that bring water to dispersal points closer to habitations, by cleaning wells and digging new ones, and by involving local communities in planning and operating safe-water schemes.

The visit had been arranged by Jon Lane, the director of Water Aid in the UK. In 1975, when I became Master in College at Eton, Jon was in his final year as a King's Scholar and Captain of the school.

Questions about the nature and destiny of human beings arise naturally in a land where excavations at Olduvai Gorge have shed such light on mankind's early history. Questions arise also about the contribution to the current state of affairs in Tanzania of imperialism, missionary activity and independence. It was missionary endeavour that brought Mvumi its hospital and its first school. Today similarly committed folk are still applying their teaching, medicine and engineering expertise in Mvumi.

● *The author is the Head Master of Eton College. Anyone wishing to make a donation to Mvumi school should make a cheque out to Richard Morris, Education account (80848439), and post it to Citibank International plc, PO Box 5350, Hammersmith Grove, London W6 0WT.*



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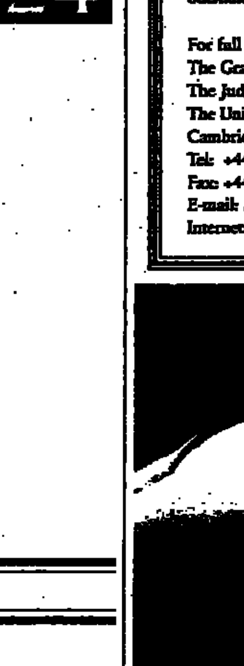
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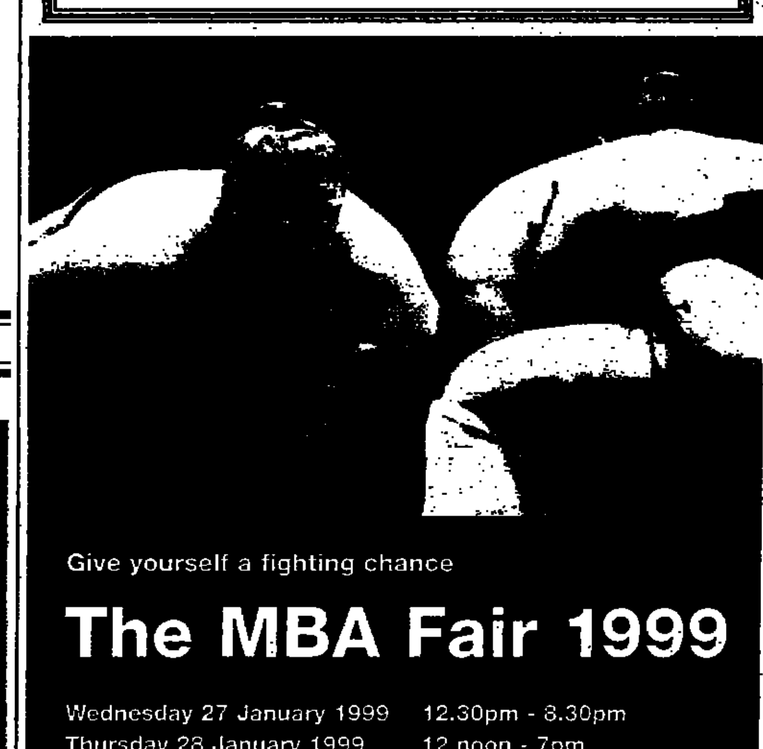
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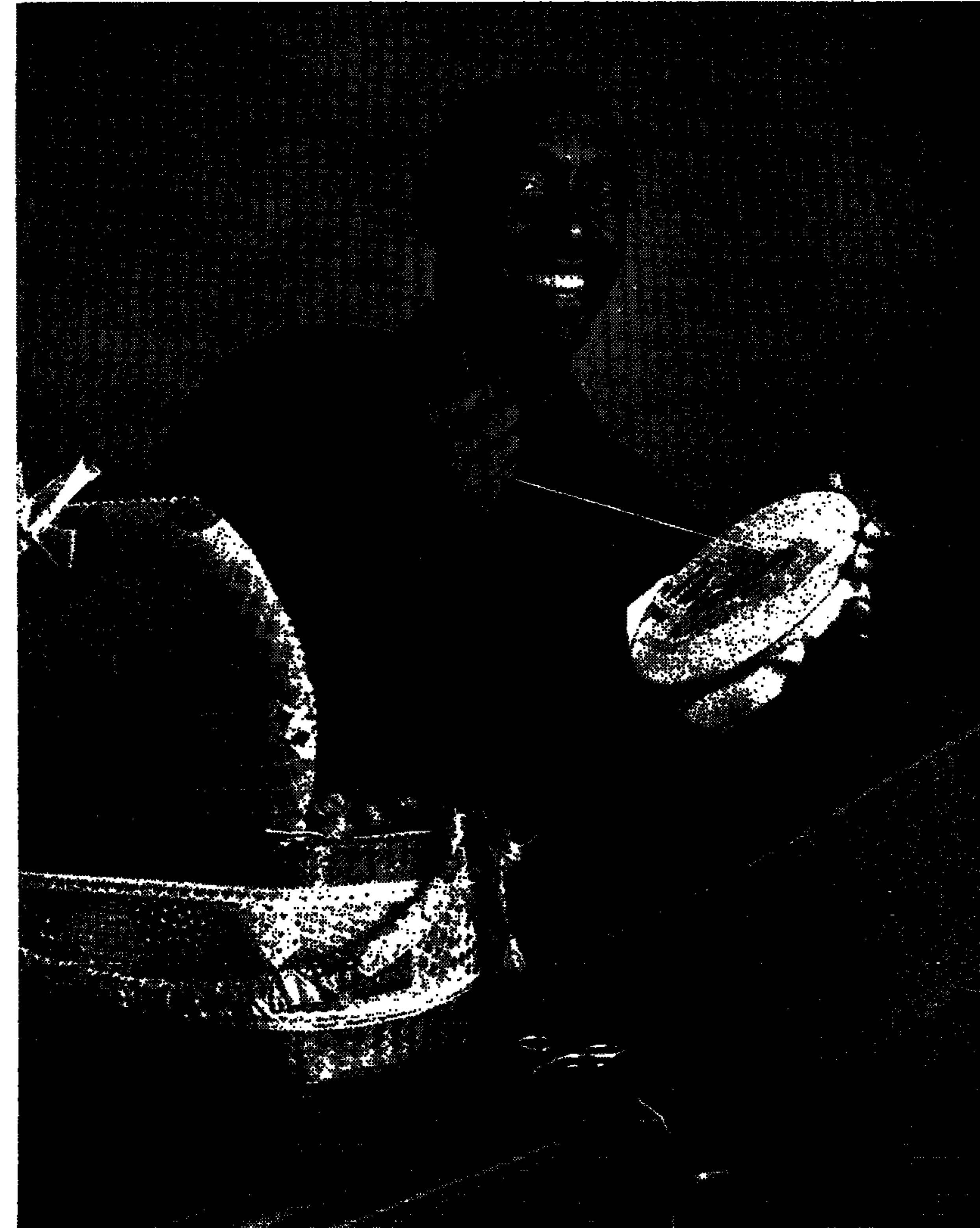








EDUCATION





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Chris McGrath on Brendan Powell, who aims to outlast young bucks at Ascot

Enduring qualities of elder statesman

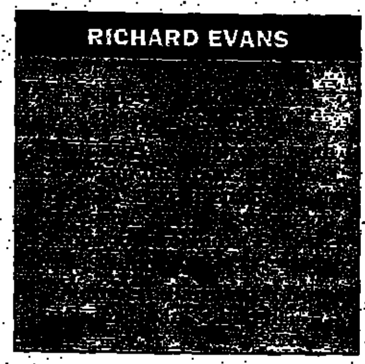
At Kempton on Wednesday, Brendan Powell had his 6,666th ride under National Hunt rules. Even allowing for those that have flung him into the ground — at the occasional cost of a broken limb or once, a perforated stomach — and those that were pulled up exhausted, he has managed the equivalent of riding around the world at racing pace. And he doesn't look a day over 200.

In the sepulchral murk of days like Wednesday, with his grey face spattered with mud, time — not to mention the odd hoof — seems to have scuffed its passage across Powell's features. Yet it is a face marvellously expressive of the charm and wisdom of a jockey who, at 38, retains a pristine zeal for his calling. Young at heart and sage in deed, having first ridden as an amateur in Ireland aged just 14, he is priceless to trainers. At Ascot tomorrow, James Adam duly charges him with the most precious of assignments — Monnaie Forte, backed from 20-1 to 4-1 for the Victor Chandler Chase.

In terms of rides, Powell belongs with champions. Only Dunwoody and Scudamore are ahead of him, while names like Mellor, Francome, Biddlecombe and O'Neill have long been left behind. With 564 winners, his strike-rate is half their average, but Powell's achievements — which embrace the famous moment when he picked Rhyme 'N' Reason off the floor at Becher's Brook to win the 1988 Grand National — dignifies the standing of countless "journeymen" whose careers have, by contrast, been drab and unfulfilled.

"The only way I could get started over here was to ride horses nobody else wanted," he said. "And a good horse can fall as hard as a bad one." On the whole, moreover, his sanguine spirit and its durable casing have been rewarded. "Touch wood, I've been, luckier than some, though they told me I wouldn't ride again after puncturing my stomach. I thought I was okay, but an hour after the race someone gave me a can of coke. There was a hole in the stomach wall and — well, that was Thursday. The next thing I knew I was telling the doctor that I had a ride in the next, but it was Sunday morning and I looked and saw 20 tubes sticking out of me."

Then Powell broke a leg. As soon as it healed, he broke it again. That was 1992 and, for the only time, he wondered if he might have to retire. Then success on a chance ride at



Hereford introduced him to Bob Buckler, who was just getting started; the Dorset stable's continuing advance and the renewed momentum of his own career is a measure of their mutual services since.

When he finally turns his hand to training himself, Powell will crave the sort of days he enjoyed with Barnbrook Again, Panto Prince, Dublin Flyer — and Rhyme 'N' Reason. "At the time, it didn't feel that bad when he did the splits. People only remember it because of how it looks in slow motion or photos. What I do remember is Little Polveir unseating Tom Morgan five out, leaving me in front — the worst thing that could have happened. "Woody" [Richard Dunwoody], being the jockey he is, took a pull on West Tip to leave me there and I thought my horse was going to refuse the second last. Luckily, Young Driver pinged it and landed in front. Halfway up the run-in, I knew we'd win."

While Dunwoody and Graham Bradley (a month Powell's senior) remain consummate masters, his generation are now the elder statesmen. "There are some tremendous jockeys coming through, though I always tell them experience will beat youth. I'd been riding four seasons before some of them were born. Things have certainly changed. Even half a dozen years ago, there was a lot more loyalty but, with agents, 90 per cent of that has gone. I'm still riding work for Jenny Pitman, though, who I joined when I first came over. There were no agents or mobiles in 1981."

Yet Powell copes better than many of his juniors with the unrelenting pace of the modern sport. "I did 84,000 miles last year, but the car is about the only place I relax. I don't think I'd have lasted half as long if I struggled with my weight. When you see Andrew Thornton and Tony McCoy constantly in the sauna, it's hard to see them riding at 38."

So how long can he match strides with the young bucks, and frustrate his palpable curiosity about training? "How long's a piece of rope?" he asks. "Each season, one or two horses come along to keep you going. I'm in the top half dozen again for rides, while 20 winners so far is good going with Bob's horses only now hitting form. I'll keep going until I stop enjoying it. Bob says I've got to stay for Copper Boy in the Millennium Gold Cup, but I tell him he might be stuck with me for a year or two after that."

JULIAN HERBERT/ALLSPORT



Powell partners the well-backed Monnaie Forte in the Victor Chandler Chase at Ascot tomorrow

Mullins ends barren spell

By Our Racing Staff

SEAMUS MULLINS ended a 77-day barren spell in style when The Land Agent lifted the featured John Bull Chase at Wincanton yesterday.

Partnered by Mick Fitzgerald, the eight-year-old struck the front four out and went ten lengths clear of Mulligan, with Wayward King, who had beaten the winner on Boxing Day, a further six lengths away in third.

"I knew he was coming back to himself and thought he had a live chance as he likes this better ground rather than the very wet here at Christmas," Mullins's wife, Sally, said.

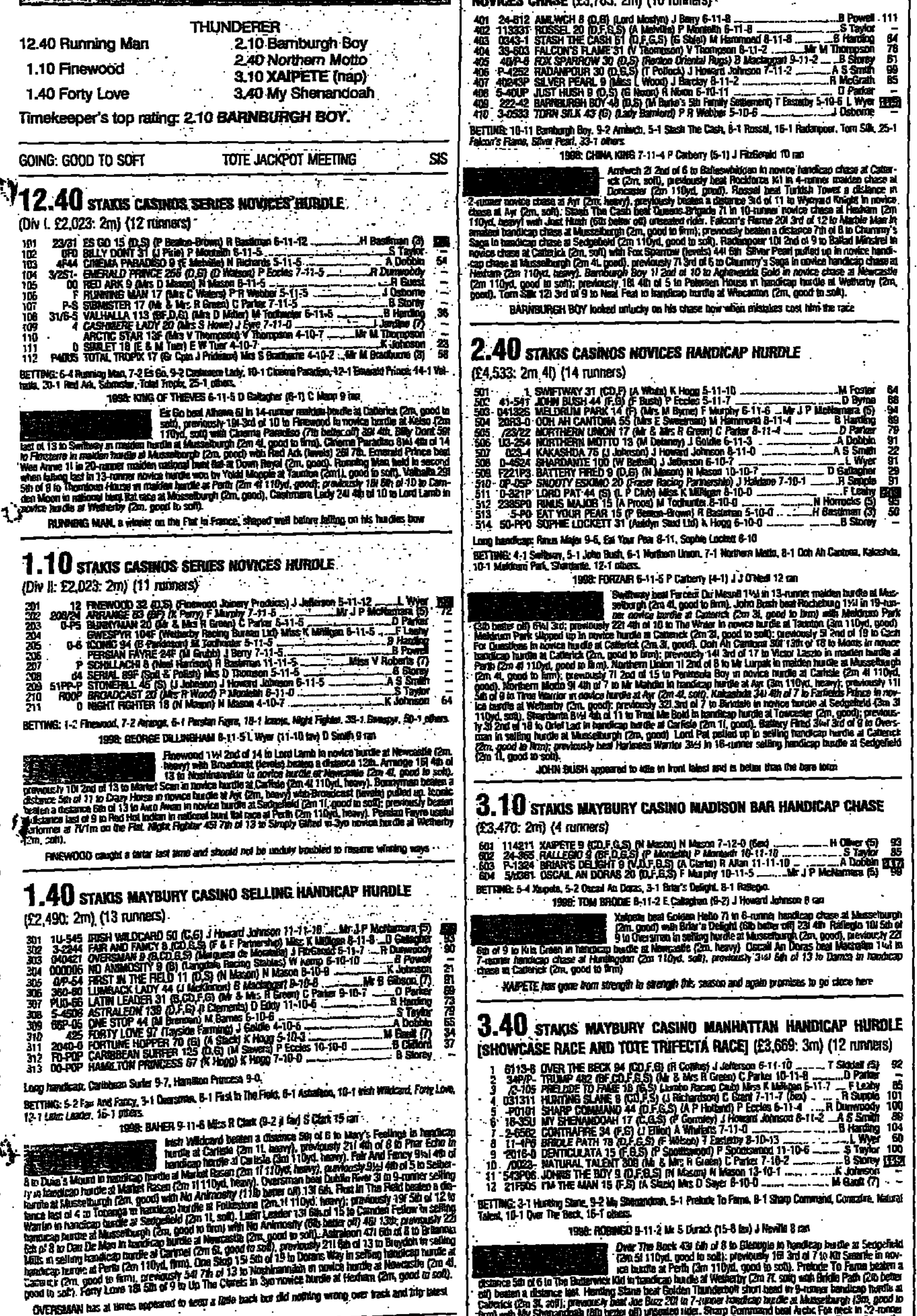
Looking to the future, Mrs Mullins said of the winner: "The Racing Post Chase at Kempton late in February has been suggested for him, but I don't make the entries."

Tamarindo, pulled up in the Betterware Cup at Ascot last month, was again bitterly disappointing, dropping out quickly on the home turn before being pulled up approaching two out.

Martin Pipe, his trainer, told the stewards that he could offer no explanation for the dismal showing, but they ordered the six-year-old to be routine dope-tested.

Mrs Mullins is now considering banning her husband from going racing again after the stable landed its second-ever double when Krabloonik and Jamie Goldstein ran away with the Jamboree Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle.

Pipe was earlier successful with the newcomer, Mysterious Ecology, in the Blackmore Vale Novices' Claiming Hurdle.



THUNDERER

12.40 Running Man. 1.10 Finewood. 1.40 Forty Love. 2.10 Bamburgh Boy. 2.40 Northern Motto. 3.10 XAIPETE (nap). 3.40 My Shenandoah.

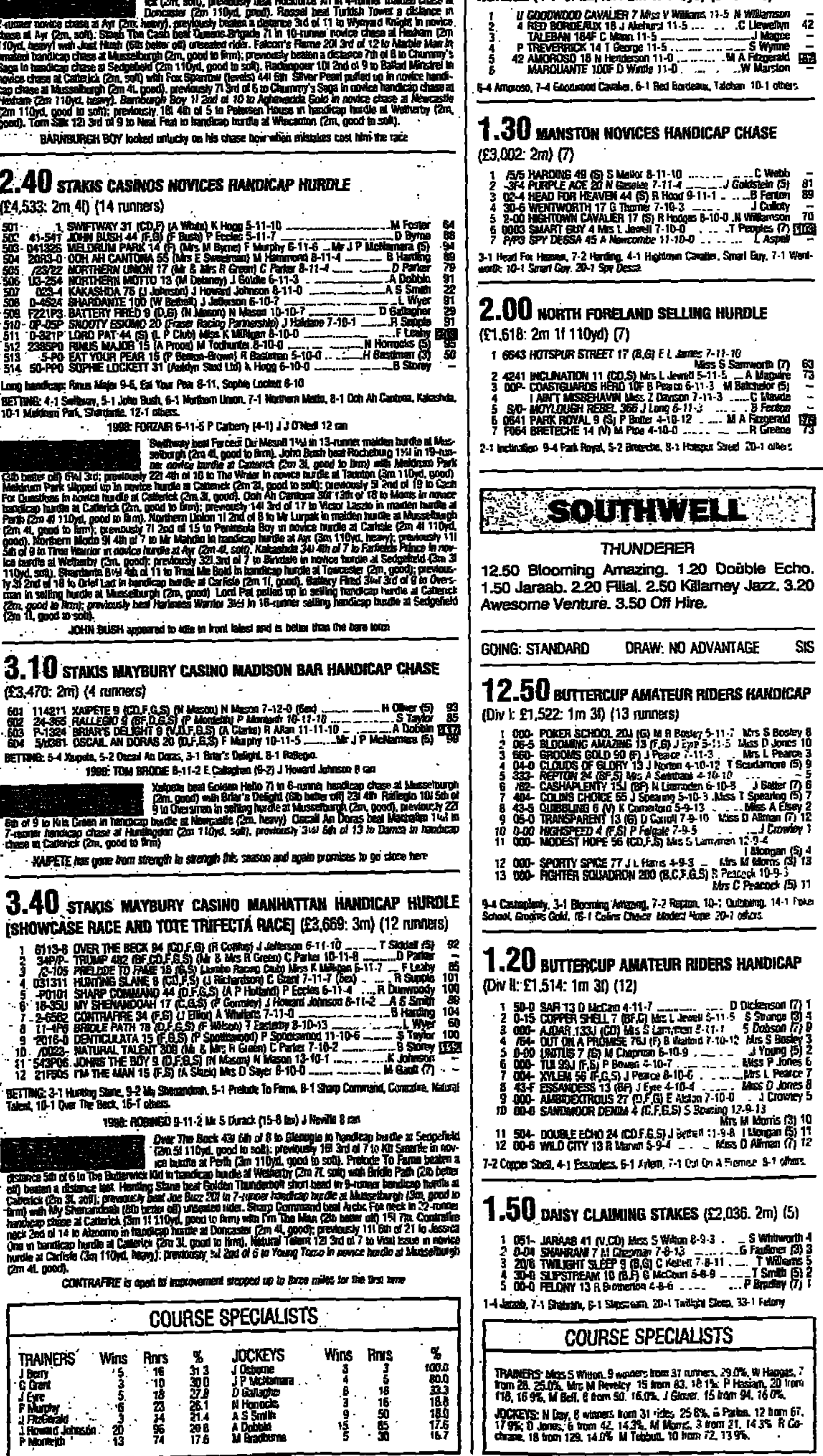
Timekeeper's top rating: 2.10 BARNBURGH BOY.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

12.40 STAKIS CASINOS SERIES NOVICES HURDLE

1.10 STAKIS CASINOS SERIES NOVICES HURDLE

1.40 STAKIS MAYBURY CASINO SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE



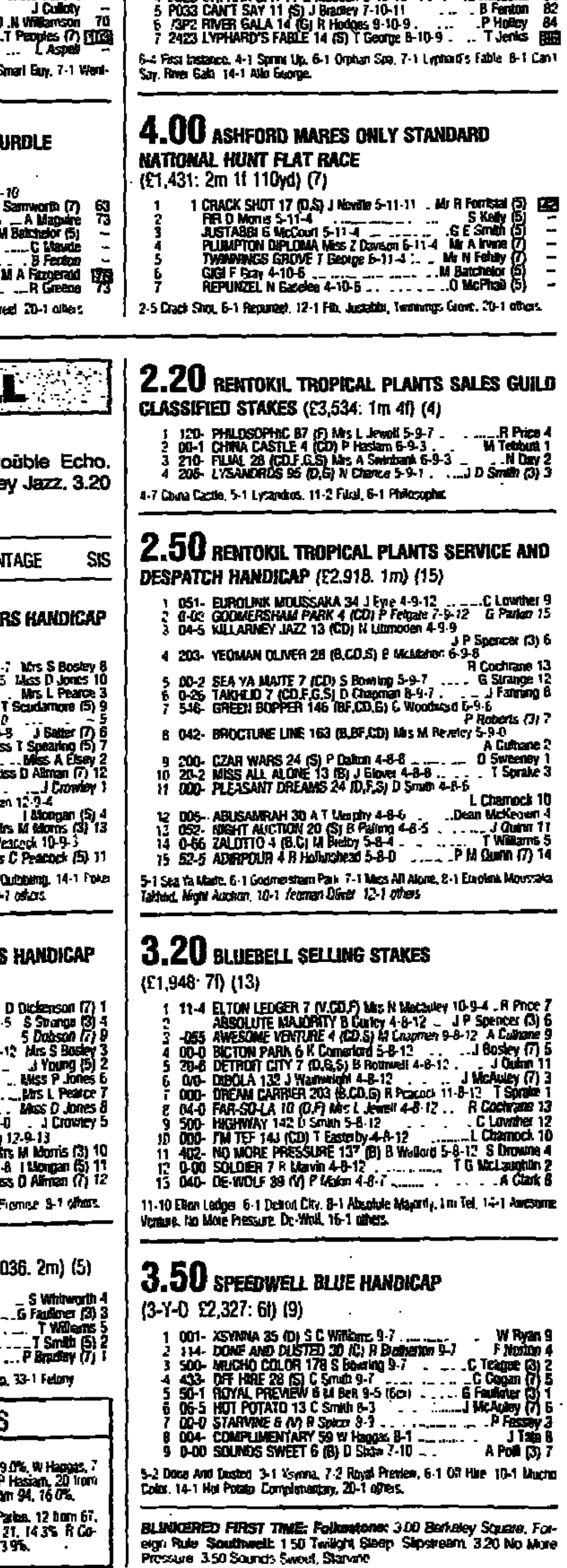
2.10 STAKIS MAYBURY CASINO CHARLESTON RESTAURANT NOVICES CHASE (£3,763: 2m) (10 runners)

2.40 STAKIS CASINOS NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE

3.10 STAKIS MAYBURY CASINO MADISON BAR HANDICAP CHASE

3.40 STAKIS MAYBURY CASINO MANHATTAN HANDICAP HURDLE (SHOWCASE RACE AND TOTE TRIFECTA RACE)

COURSE SPECIALISTS



FOLKESTONE

THUNDERER

1.00 Amoroso. 1.30 Head For Heaven. 2.00 Park Royal. 2.30 Scavo. 3.00 Topanga. 3.30 First Instance. 4.00 Crack Shot.

GOING: SOFT (CHASE COURSE); HEAVY (HURDLES) SIS

1.00 VALENTINE GORTON JUVENILE MAIDEN HURDLE (4-Y-O: £2,407: 2m 1f 110yd) (6 runners)

1 U GOODWOOD CAVALIER 7 Miss V Williams 11-5 N Williamson —
2 4 RED BORDEAUX 18 J Akehurst 11-5 C Llewellyn 42
3 TALEBAN 184F C Mann 11-5 J Magee —
4 P TREVERRICK 14 T George 11-5 S Wynne —
5 42 AMOROSO 18 N Henderson 11-0 M A Fitzgerald
6 MARQUANTE 100F D Wintle 11-0 W Marston —

1.30 MANSTON NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE

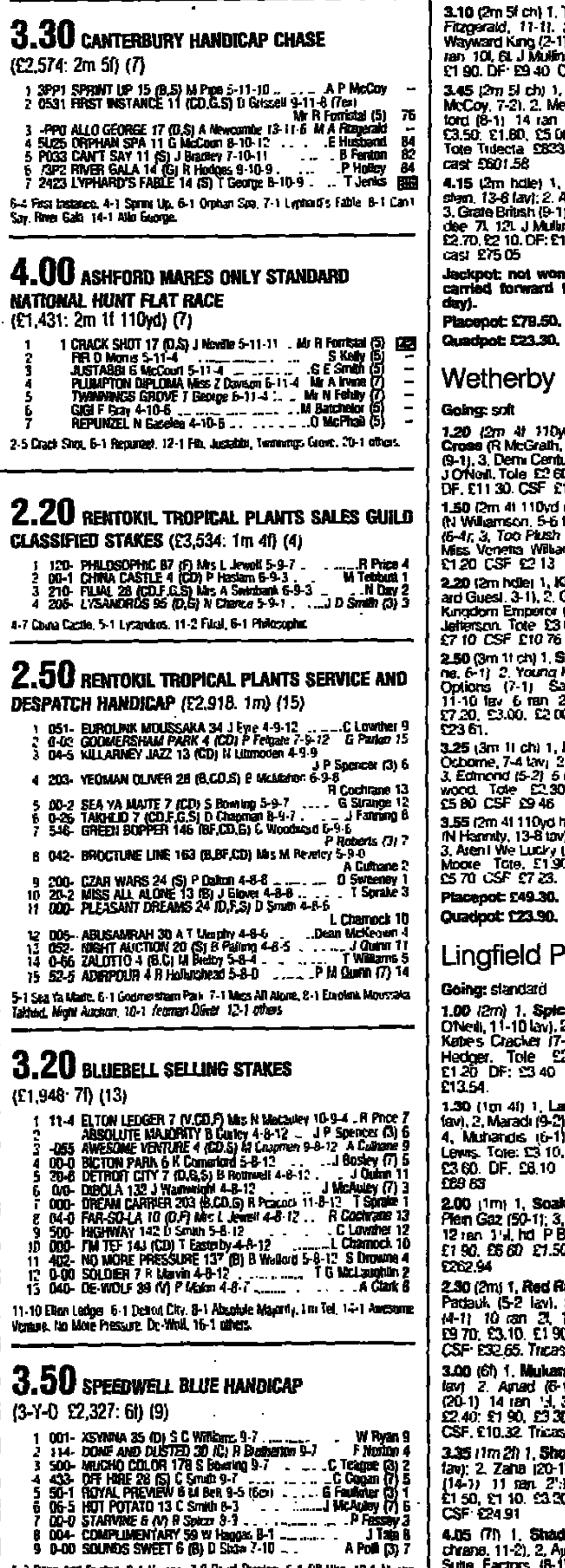
3 02-4 HEAD FOR HEAVEN 44 (S) R Hoad 9-11-1 B Fenton 89
4 30-6 WENTWORTH 17 G Thorner 7-10-3 J Culloty —
5 2-00 HIGHTOWN CAVALIER 17 (S) R Hodges 8-10-0 N Williamson 70
6 0003 SMART GUY 4 Mrs L Jewell 7-10-0 T Peoples (7)
7 P/P3 SPY DESSA 45 A Newcombe 11-10-0 L Aspell —

3-1 Head For Heaven, 7-2 Harding, 4-1 Hightown Cavalier, Smart Guy, 7-1 Wentworth, 10-1 Smart Guy, 20-1 Spy Dessa

2.00 NORTH FORELAND SELLING HURDLE (£1,618: 2m 1f 110yd) (7)

1 6643 HOTSPUR STREET 17 (B,G) E L James 7-11-10 Miss S Samworth (7) 63
2 4241 INCLINATION 11 (CD,S) Mrs L Jewell 5-11-5 A Maguire 73
3 00P- COASTGUARDS HERO 10F B Pearce 6-11-3 M Batchelor (5) —
4 I AIN'T MISSBEHAVIN Miss Z Davison 7-11-3 C Maude —
5 S/0- MOYLOUGH REBEL 366 J Long 6-11-3 B Fenton —
6 0641 PARK ROYAL 9 (S) P Butler 4-10-12 M A Fitzgerald
7 F064 BRETECHE 14 (V) M Pipe 4-10-0 R Greene 73

2-1 Inclination, 9-4 Park Royal, 5-2 Breteche, 8-1 Hotspur Street, 20-1 others



2.30 WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP CHASE (£7,335: 3m 2f) (3)

3.00 HBLB GOODWINS HANDICAP HURDLE (£1,807: 2m 1f 110yd) (6)

3.30 CANTERBURY HANDICAP CHASE (£2,574: 2m 5f) (7)

4.00 ASHFORD MARES ONLY STANDARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,431: 2m 1f 110yd) (7)

SOUTHWELL

THUNDERER

12.50 Blooming Amazing. 1.20 Double Echo. 1.50 Jaraab. 2.20 Filial. 2.50 Killarney Jazz. 3.20 Awesome Venture. 3.50 Off Hire.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE SIS

12.50 BUTTERCUP AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP

1.20 BUTTERCUP AMATEUR RIDERS HANDICAP

1.50 DAISY CLAIMING STAKES (£2,036: 2m) (5)

2.20 RENTOKIL TROPICAL PLANTS SALES GUILD CLASSIFIED STAKES (£3,534: 1m 4f) (4)

2.50 RENTOKIL TROPICAL PLANTS SERVICE AND DESPATCH HANDICAP (£2,918: 1m) (15)

3.20 BLUEBELL SELLING STAKES

3.50 SPEEDWELL BLUE HANDICAP

COURSE SPECIALISTS

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Wincanton

Going: soft, good to soft in places

1.40 (2m hdle) 1, **Hardfy** (J Culloty, 7-1) 2, Boro Sovereign (5-4 fav). 3, Proper Primitive (33-1) 13 ran NR Croker. 1½l, 27l Miss H Knight. Tote: £8.10; £1.60, £1.50, £4.10. DF £6.00. CSF £14.91.

2.10 (3m 1f 110yd ch) 1, **Malwood Castle** (R Widger, 9-2, Richard Evans's nap). 2, Saras Delight (2-1 fav). 3, Koo's Promise (25-1) 7 ran. 3½l, 8l R Alner. Tote: £5.70; £2.30, £2.10. DF: £6.40. CSF £13.45

2.40 (2m hdle) 1, **Mysterious Ecology** (A P McCoy, 5-2 fav). 2, Rusk (4-1). 3, Golden Lily (8-1) 17 ran NR Normanby Road. 9l, 2l M Pipe. Tote £3.00; £1.60, £2.00, £1.70. DF £6.20. CSF £11.05

3.10 (2m 5f ch) 1, **The Land Agent** (M A Fitzgerald, 11-1). 2, Mulligan (11-4). 3, Wayward King (2-1) Tamarindo 5-4 fav. 5 ran. 10l, 6l. J Mullins. Tote £11.00; £2.40, £1.90. DF: £9.40. CSF: £38.00

3.45 (2m 5f ch) 1, **The Cockertoo** (A P McCoy, 7-2). 2, Melling (25-1). 3, Millersford (8-1) 14 ran. 9l, hd. R Alner. Tote: £3.50; £1.80, £5.00, £1.40. DF: £43.60. Tote Trifecta £833.50. CSF £78.97. Tricast £601.58

4.15 (2m hdle) 1, **Krabloonik** (J Goldstein, 13-8 fav). 2, Alka International (7-1). 3, Grate British (9-1) 10 ran NR Miss Ondee. 7l, 12l. J Mullins. Tote £2.40; £1.60, £2.70, £2.10. DF: £11.10. CSF: £13.19. Tricast £75.05

Jackpot: not won (pool of £9,835.92 carried forward to Musselburgh today).

Placepot: £79.50.

Quadpot: £23.30.

Wetherby

Going: soft

1.20 (2m 4f 110yd hdle) 1, **Carbury Cross** (R McGrath, 2-1 fav). 2, Gus Berry (9-1). 3, Demi Century (9-2) 13 ran. 9l, 6l J O'Neill. Tote £2.60; £2.00, £2.10, £1.50. DF, £11.30. CSF £17.49

1.50 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, **Cardinal Rule** (N Williamson, 5-6 fav). 2, River Unshion (6-4). 3, Too Plush (10-1) 4 ran. 2l, dist. Miss Venetia Williams. Tote £1.80. DF £1.20. CSF £2.13

2.20 (2m hdle) 1, **Kings Measure** (Richard Guest, 3-1). 2, Grooving (11-4 fav). 3, Kingdom Emperor (7-2). 5 ran. 7l, 2½l J Jefferson. Tote £3.00; £1.10, £2.10. DF £7.10. CSF £10.76

2.50 (3m 1f ch) 1, **Step On Eyre** (S Wynne, 6-1). 2, Young Kenny (7-2). 3, Shore Options (7-1) Santa Concerto (4th) 11-10 fav. 6 ran. 2½l, 8l H Daly. Tote £7.20; £3.00, £2.00. DF £14.00. CSF £23.61.

3.25 (3m 1f ch) 1, **Kadou Nonantais** (J Osborne, 7-4 fav). 2, Scotton Green (5-1). 3, Edmond (5-2) 5 ran. 14l, dist. O Sherwood. Tote £2.30; £1.90, £3.10. DF £5.80. CSF £9.46

3.55 (2m 4f 110yd hdle) 1, **Scotmail Lad** (N Hannity, 13-8 fav). 2, Misty Class (7-2). 3, Aren't We Lucky (5-1) 7 ran. 1l, dist. G Moore. Tote £1.90; £3.40, £1.70. DF £5.70. CSF £7.23.

Placepot: £49.30.

Quadpot: £23.90.

Lingfield Park

Going: standard

1.00 (2m) 1, **Spick And Span** (Dane O'Neill, 11-10 fav). 2, Pipe Music (5-2). 3, Kates's Cracker (7-1) 11 ran. ½l, 7l P Hedger. Tote £2.00; £1.30, £1.50, £1.20. DF: £3.40. CSF £3.58. Tricast £13.54.

1.30 (1m 4f) 1, **Latin Bay** (P Doe, 2-1 fav). 2, Maradi (9-2). 3, Santarene (12-1). 4, Muhandis (6-1) 16 ran. ½l, 8l G Lewis. Tote: £3.10; £1.10, £1.50, £2.80, £3.60. DF, £8.10. CSF £9.83. Tricast £69.63

2.00 (1m) 1, **Soaking** (J Tate, 6-1). 2, Plein Gaz (50-1). 3, Night City (13-8 fav) 12 ran. 1½l, hd. P Burgoyne. Tote £9.10; £1.90, £6.60, £1.50. DF: £195.50. CSF £262.94

2.30 (2m) 1, **Red Raja** (W Ryan, 10-1). 2, Padauk (5-2 fav). 3, Percamps Mission (4-1) 10 ran. 2l, 1½l. P Mitchell. Tote £9.70; £3.10, £1.90, £1.60. DF £17.70. CSF £32.65. Tricast £111.92.

3.00 (6f) 1, **Mukarrab** (A Culhane, 13-8 fav). 2, Amad (6-1). 3, Mike's Double (20-1) 14 ran. ½l, 3l D Chapman. Tote £2.40; £1.90, £3.30, £5.80. DF: £11.20. CSF £10.32. Tricast £152.00.

3.35 (1m 2f) 1, **Shogun** (D Sweeney, 4-5 fav). 2, Zahra (20-1). 3, Seven O Seven (14-1) 11 ran. 2½l, nk. K Burke. Tote £1.50; £1.10, £3.30, £3.60. DF: £18.70. CSF £24.91

4.05 (7f) 1, **Shades of Love** (R Cochrane, 11-2). 2, Ayo Dancer (3-1 fav). 3, Suite Factors (8-1). 14 ran. 1l, hd. V Soane. Tote £7.80; £2.80, £1.30, £3.60. DF £19.50. CSF £22.61. Tricast £134.33

Placepot: £11.30.

Quadpot: £5.30.

Lara calls for show of pride in final fling

By Our Sports Staff

BRIAN LARA is hoping for a show of pride from his West Indies team when they attempt to avoid a 5-0 series whitewash in the final Test against South Africa, which opens at Centurion Park in Centurion today.

Lara's men are feeling the heat from their supporters in the Caribbean and from a South Africa side bent on ending the series in style. No South Africa team has won a series 5-0, the closest being the 4-0 triumph by Ali Bacher's side over Bill Lawry's Australia in 1969-70, and that is the target for Hansie Cronje, the captain.

"Our most important preparation is mental," Lara said. "It's very, very tough to be 4-0 down especially when it's the first time it has happened to any of the players. We know we still have to try and be positive."

West Indies' failures on tour stem from wretched batting by the top six and assorted injuries among the fast bowlers. Additionally, a pre-tour dispute involving the West Indies Cricket Board still lingers, with reports of rifts within the touring party.

The visitors' morale suffered further when the squad for the one-day series was announced and it was learnt that Courtney Walsh, Franklyn Rose and Mervyn Dillon, the fast bowlers, and Stuart Williams and Clayton Lambert, the opening batsmen, would be returning home. Keith Arthurton, Keith Semple, Reon King and Neil McGarrell will join the party.

The only problem for South Africa is a hamstring injury to Allan Donald, the world No 1 fast bowler. Lance Klusener stands by to take his place.

SOUTH AFRICA: G Kirsten, H H Gibbs, J H Kallis, D J Cullinan, W J Cronje (captain), J N Rhodes, S M Pollock, M V Boucher, A A Donald (or L Klusener), D J Terbrugge, P R Adams. 12th man: A G Prince.

WEST INDIES (from): D Ganga, P A Wallace, B C Lara (captain), S Chanderpaul, C L Hooper, S C Williams, F L Reifer, R D Jacobs, N A M McLean, R N Lewis, C E L Ambrose, M Dillon, F A Rose, J R Murray, C B Lambert, R D King

Makhaya Ntini, the first black cricketer to play for South Africa, is to appear in court today on rape charges, according to South African radio. He is reportedly charged with raping a female student on December 1.

Hussain is likely choice to fill key position against Australia

England identify flexibility as key to success

From Michael Henderson in Melbourne

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLIVE MASON / ALLSPORT

ONE-DAY cricket has changed so much over the past few years that one hesitates to say that this game, so different now to the first-class sort, will not continue to mutate into some strange breed. The last World Cup witnessed a turning post in its evolution, and international teams and their coaches are forever on the look-out for the X Factor that will help to give them an advantage, however small.

When the Gillette Cup was introduced in 1963, originally over 65 overs, Brian Close, the captain of Yorkshire, the county champions, said that whoever scored 180 runs against them would deserve to win. With hindsight, it was an extraordinary claim, but for a good few years afterwards, as teams became familiar with this wonderful new world, a score of 240 took some beating over 60 overs.

David Lloyd belonged to the Lancashire team that won three successive Gillette Cups from 1970, and captained the team that won it again in 1975. There is a good case for saying that that team, which reached six Gillette finals in seven seasons, was as accomplished a one-day side as any England has thrown up but the scores make illuminating reading today, so far has the game moved on. In those days, if you made more than 50 off the last ten overs they brought out the Town Band.

As the coach of an England side desperate to win the World Cup, and desperate is not too strong a word, Lloyd watches this changing world with great interest. England have had some poor one-day results under his stewardship, notably in the West Indies last spring, when they went down 4-1, but now they have a clearer idea of which is their best team they are beginning to pick themselves up.

Shane Warne will lead Australia against England today after Steve Waugh was ruled out by the groin strain that forced him to miss Australia's first two matches. Waugh expects to return against England in Sydney on Sunday.

In this triangular competition they have beaten Australia and Sri Lanka, and go into the second game against Australia at the MCG with hope, if not outright confidence. The manner of Australia's eight-wicket victory against Sri Lanka in Sydney on Wednesday should persuade them not to take anything for granted. Adam Gilchrist's superb hundred, his fourth in one-day internationals, made short work of the World Cup holders.

It is reasonable to say that England have a fair idea of eight or nine members of the team they will use in the summer, and the order in which they will bat. The only problem that genuinely needs to be solved is No 3, where Vince Wells and Graeme Hick batted last weekend in Brisbane. Hick will revert to No 4 as a matter of course and Wells is here to gain experience in case he is required.

The No 3 position is a key one in first-class cricket. That goes without saying. In the shorter form of the game it has become something akin to the loose forward in rugby league, in that it can be anything you want it to be. Lloyd acknowledges this and therefore, although Nasser Hussain may well get his chance there in the latest game, nothing is set in stone.

"Who bats at No 3 will be determined by the conditions, and by the state of the game", Lloyd said. "It will depend on who is bowling, and how the game is going. We could have Mark Ealham batting there, or perhaps Robert Croft, or Hick, or Fairbrother. It is really flexible.

"Australia had Brendon Julian padded up to go in there the other night. In the end they didn't send him in because they didn't lose a wicket until the openers had put on 100 plus. In the past they've sent in Shane Warne at No 4, and other teams have promoted players. Those first 15 overs are crucial. You need to take advantage as far as you can."

Now that it has been decided that Stewart will open the batting with Knight and that Hick and Fairbrother will fill the places at four and five, with Adam Hollioake at six, opportunities are limited for the others. That is as it should be. If England don't know by now what sort of team they want to send out in May, they really are up a gum tree. Players will be tested at No 3, both here and in the Sharjah tournament in March, before England finalise their 15-man party. Alistair Brown, of Surrey, who is unlucky not to be here, remains in the frame, as they say, while Hussain's superb all-round fielding will keep him involved. England need as many good fielders as they can lay their hands on, which gives Dean Headley the edge over rivals such as Fraser and Martin for the third quick bowler's spot.

Meanwhile, Lloyd takes notes, and plots. "I'm enjoying watching the teams making their plans, to see where they go right and where they go wrong." All the time, the others, not only the two sides that are here, are watching him. It's a kind of Berlin Wall game, with Lloyd playing the role of Smiley. The game awaits resolution at Lord's on June 20.


Hick is glad of a drink break during practice at the MCG


The Hollioakes, Ben, right, and Adam, warm up before the net session yesterday

CYCLING

Virenque handed a lifeline back to the Tour

By Jeremy Whittle

RICHARD VIRENQUE, the sporting hero of France, who announced his retirement from cycling before Christmas after being disgraced by the doping revelations that rocked the Tour de France last summer, will be surprisingly welcomed back into the professional fold in Paris today.

Virenque, a former Tour de France runner-up, will sign for Polti, the leading Italian sponsor, in the same Paris theatre where, last autumn, the organisers of the Tour de France pledged to rid their race of any riders with tainted reputations.

Now, Virenque, who despite admissions of systematic doping by his Festina team-mates, continues to maintain his innocence, will expect to line up for the 1999 Tour with hopes of success, much as he did in Dublin last July, when the drama of the "Festina Affair" unfolded.

Despite his tearful departure from the Tour last summer, Virenque remains an icon in French sport, and is viewed as the only Frenchman capable of winning the nation's most cherished event. But last autumn, in the wake of the Tour scandal, a series of accusations by Willy Voet, his former personal aide and masseur, seemed to scar his reputation beyond repair and threatened to end his career.

Worse followed when the police confessions of Virenque's Festina team-mates, given after their arrests during the Tour, were made public. "EPO was taken after certain stage finishes in the hotel room," one of his team-mates admitted.

Virenque stuck to his line, however, admitting only that: "I cannot say for certain that doping products weren't given to me without my knowing it." This argument was laughed off by Voet and by others, who insisted he must have known whether he was doped or not.

As the evidence against him mounted, Virenque was dropped by Festina as the sponsor battled to clean up its act. Although the team's other riders admitted their guilt and accepted pay cuts, Virenque was unwilling to take a salary drop and continued to protest his innocence.

As the scandal rumbled on, he was dismissed by Festina and found himself without a sponsor as the French media and the sport itself closed ranks against him. It was only when he made another tearful appearance on French television, announcing that he was being forced to retire by a media smear campaign against him, that public interest in his career was reawakened.

After negotiations with several sponsors fell through, Polti have offered him a lifeline that may yet resurrect his Tour de France dreams.



Virenque: icon in France

Sohail omitted from party to tour India

By Our Sports Staff

AAMIR SOHAIL, the former Pakistan captain, has paid the price for not attending a team training camp by being left out of the 16-man squad for the tour of India, which starts next Thursday.

"I am really disappointed at being dropped because I wanted to play a Test against India before retiring, but I think they don't need me any more," Sohail said. To compound his misery, Sohail's place has gone to an uncapped 22-year-old, Wajahatullah.

Sohail, 32, led Pakistan to defeat by Australia and then walked out on the team before the second home Test against Zimbabwe. Wasim Bari, the chief Pakistan selector, confirmed that Sohail did not attend the training camp and so his name was not considered.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said he had told them that he was not fit to go on the tour, but Sohail countered: "I had a chest infection, but that was no reason to drop me. In the past many players were selected without attending the camp, but in my case they found a pretext to drop me."

He denied, too, that he avoided the camp because he did not want to play with players whom he has accused of involvement in match fixing and betting.

SQUAD: Wasim Akram (captain), Moin Khan (vice-captain), Saeed Anwar, Mohammad Naveed, Wajahatullah, Shahid Afridi, Ijaz Ahmed, Salim Malik, Yousuf Youhanna, Azhar Mahmood, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Mushtaq Ahmed, Saqlain Mushtaq and Nadeem Khan. Reserves: Asif Mujtaba, Rashid Latif and Shahid Nazir

Gough relying on diet of Bull

John Stern on how psychology can help the England Under-19 team in New Zealand

WHEN Michael Gough, who captains England Under-19 on their forthcoming tour of New Zealand, talks about "visualisation" and "goal-setting", one is left in no doubt about the influence on England cricketers of all ages of the ever-growing army of extracurricular instructors and consultants.

Some still cast a suspicious eye towards analysts, psychologists and dieticians, but Gough, the tall, doughty Durham right-hand batsman, is adamant that some of his success can be attributed to the assistance of Steve Bull, the England and Wales Cricket Board's psychologist.

Gough's strengths, for England Under-19 and his county, have been his ability to concentrate for long periods and his unflappable temperament. "I've only worked with Steve in short, sharp sessions, but he's been a great help," Gough said. "It's up to each player how much they take on board of what he says, but I'm really into it now and he's given me quite a bit of further reading as well.

"He talks a lot about mental preparation, creating routines which you repeat each time you go out to bat or bowl. There are aspects of my game, such as my shots on the off side, that needed work and he's helped me to visualise the shots I want to play in order for me to play them."

An innovation on this tour is the establishment of a code of conduct, drawn up by the players and sanctioned by the management, with the assistance of Impact, the management consultancy firm that worked with the successful British Isles rugby team two years ago.

On the England Under-19 tour of South Africa last year, some players felt that they ought to have been given a freer rein, so this time they have the chance to show that they can take more responsibility, on and off the field. Having agreed to the code, though, the players know that any shirking or lack of discipline will be seen as a betrayal of their own principles.

The 15-man party, managed for the first time by Mike Gatting, leaves for Auckland tomorrow and contains five players, including Gough, who toured South Africa. Giles Haywood, the Sussex all-rounder, and Richard Logan, the Northamptonshire seam bowler, who were members of the side that won the under-19 World Cup by beating New Zealand in the final. Matt Bulbeck, the Somerset left-arm bowler, and Mark Wallace, the wicketkeeper from Glamorgan, made their debuts last summer in the 2-1 series win over Pakistan.

The craving for wrist spin that has heaped an unhealthy amount of pressure on Chris Schofield, of Lancashire, will not be satisfied this time. Richard Dawson, a Yorkshire off break bowler, and Graeme Bridge, a slow left-arm bowler from Durham, will provide the spinning options.

There are, however, two left-arm fast bowlers in the party. Bulbeck swings the ball while Matthew Whiley, who made his county championship debut for Nottinghamshire last season, is arguably the quickest bowler in the squad. The most notable absentee is Graham Napier, the Essex all-rounder, who is unavailable because of a back injury.

New Zealand's emphasis on youth development can be gauged by the recent establishment of an academy near Christchurch, which is run by Dayle Hadlee, the former Test cricketer and brother of Sir Richard. Their under-19 team won a three-match series in England in 1996 and included two players — Craig McMillan and Daniel Vettori — who are now regulars in the Test side and another, Matthew Bell, who has just broken into the team.

ENGLAND UNDER-19 TOUR DETAILS

SQUAD: M A Gough (Durham, captain), I Bell (Warwickshire), G Bridge (Durham), M P Bulbeck (Somerset), M Carberry (Surrey), R Dawson (Yorkshire), J Fearick (Lancashire), I N Flanagan (Essex), G R Haywood (Sussex), R J Logan (Northamptonshire), J Maunders (Middlesex), M J Symington (Durham), J T Tucker (Somerset), M Wallace (Glamorgan), M J A Whiley (Nottinghamshire).

Manager: M W Gatting.

Coach: J Abrahams.

ITINERARY: Jan 24-26: Auckland: v Auckland Emerging Players. 28-30: Palmerston North: v Central Districts Emerging Players. Feb 2-5: New Plymouth: First Test v New Zealand Under-19. 8-11: Wellington: Second Test. 13-15: Wellington: v Wellington Emerging Players. 18-21: Alexandra: Third Test. 23: Christchurch: v Canterbury Emerging Players. 26: Christchurch: First one-day international v New Zealand Under-19. 27: Hamilton: Second one-day international. Mar 1: Hamilton: Third one-day international.

HOCKEY: CANTERBURY'S INJURED PLAYER-MANAGER DELAYS RETURN

Kerly is taking no risks over cup-tie

By Sydney Friskin

A RIB injury will probably keep Sean Kerly, the player-manager of Canterbury, out of the English Hockey Association Cup fifth-round tie at home to East Grinstead on Sunday. David Mathews, one of their best forwards, is unwell and must also be considered a doubtful starter.

Kerly is on the mend, but is unlikely to risk aggravating the injury against an East Grinstead side who are looking to a cup run to offset their fight for survival in the premier division of the National League.

David Luckes, the first-choice goalkeeper, has not fully recovered from knee trouble but Peter Bell, their reliable defender, returns after injury and Richard Gibson is back in the forward line after being preoccupied with examinations that have kept him out of the game for several weeks.

Hounslow, winners of the trophy on five occasions, are at home to Brooklands, the bottom club in the premier division, but who will be looking to such stalwarts as Michael Renison, David Deprez and Romano Gonzales to give them a much-needed boost.

Jason Laslett returns for Teddington, winners in 1994, against Wimbledon, but Phillip McGuire is ruled out with a back injury.

Cannock, the holders, Southgate and Old Loughtonians are expected to go through, but the outcome of the match between Old Cranleighans, who reached the quarter-finals last year, and Lewes is difficult to predict.

Bracknell relieved to lose fear factor

By Cathy Harris

THE news that there will be no relegation from the premier division of the women's national indoor league following the withdrawal of Olton was just what Bracknell wanted to hear as they open their campaign in Worcester this weekend.

Having gained promotion to the top flight, the last thing the second division outdoor club wanted was to live with the threat of relegation hanging over them.

"We really wanted to take on the best players and clubs," Sue Whelan, their captain, said. "Now we can relax without each game being a tough battle."

Whelan is among a nucleus of senior outdoor players, including Alison Baker and Rachel Powell, but Bracknell have also signed Claire Jarvis, the former England Under-18 international, from Maidenhead for the indoor season and Soma Singh, who played in the 1996 Olympic Games, is helping to coach the squad.

"We know we have much less experience than the other teams," Whelan said, "but we just want to be able to hold our own. I believe we are as well prepared as the other clubs — we certainly don't intend finishing last."

As the debate surrounding the merits of the indoor game continues, Karen Brown, Slough's England and Great Britain player, has decided to give the season a miss, although the champions have included Sam Wright in their squad after more than a year out because of illness.



SKI CLUB — SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Conditions Piste	Conditions Runs to Resort	Conditions Off/p	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
Andorra								
Soldeu	80	100	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	-4	10/01
Austria								
Kitzbühel	20	84	Good	Hard	Powder	Snow	-4	14/01
Obergurgl	50	200	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-3	14/01
Söll	20	70	Good	Open	Varied	Snow	-4	14/01
Canada								
Lake Louise	83	126	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Cloud	-2	14/01
France								
Alpe d'Huez	70	160	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Snow	0	13/01
Avoriaz	100	120	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Snow	-4	14/01
Flaine	82	210	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Cloud	0	14/01
La Clusaz	55	110	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Cloud	2	14/01
La Plagne	85	189	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Fair	-3	14/01
Les Arcs	88	182	Good	[illegible]	Heavy	Cloud	0	13/01
Megève	55	140	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Snow	2	14/01
Méribel	60	115	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Fair	0	14/01
Tignes	77	170	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Sun	-2	14/01
Val Thorens	70	130	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Fair	[illegible]	14/01
Val d'Isère	78	150	Good	[illegible]	Powder	Fair	-5	14/01
Italy								
Cervinia	45	160	Good	[illegible]	Varied	Snow	-3	14/01
Cortina	60	85	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-1	13/01
M di Campiglio	60	120	[illegible]	Open	Powder	Cloud	0	13/01
Norway								
Geilo	60	60	Good	Open	Varied	[illegible]	-15	07/01
Switzerland								
Crans Montana	30	120	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-6	14/01
Grindelwald	40	120	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	0	14/01
Klosters	46	145	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	0	14/01
Saas Fee	56	[illegible]	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-5	13/01
St Moritz	40	[illegible]	Good	Some	Powder	Cloud	-4	13/01
Verbier	25	[illegible]	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-3	14/01
Zermatt	41	121	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	14/01
United States								
Aspen	83	85	Good	Open	Powder	Fine	-11	13/01
Deer Valley	78	85	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	-6	[illegible]

http://www.skiclub.co.uk L = lower slopes; U = upper slopes

TENNIS

Hewitt confirms arrival as new kid on the block

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT IN SYDNEY

WHILE Great Britain continues to agonise over how to transform young talent into winners, Australia's production line simply gathers momentum. The latest model is Lleyton Hewitt, the teenager who gave Todd Martin the fright of his long career here in the Sydney International tournament yesterday.

"If I were a fellow 17-year-old, I'd be more than a little jealous," was Martin's succinct appraisal. Indeed, the American, who won their quarter-final 6-3, 6-7, 6-4, must have wondered how he was required to play a deciding set. He dropped just two points on service in the second set, yet Hewitt, the Artful Dodger incarnate, rallied from a 3-1 tie-break deficit to steal it from under Martin's nose.

A series of searing forehands in that tie-break were the perfect illustration that Hewitt, the world No 104, possesses mettle in abundance. He is mature beyond his years and although the vastly experienced Martin had control of the contest for long periods, Hewitt just would not lie down.

Hewitt's propensity to express his considerable range of emotions allows his audience to "play" the match with him — hence his popularity with the Australian public. He faced several moments of crisis, each of which he repelled by confronting the menace head-on.

The scraps left to Hewitt from Martin's dominant service games would not have fed a sparrow, never mind a creature of Hewitt's appetite, and the match looked to be a formality when Martin broke his opponent at the start of the third set — yet Hewitt responded like a wounded lion, converting a rare break point with an exquisite lob that emphasised the depth of his talent. Martin, himself no forlorn hope for the Australian Open, the opening grand-slam event of the season, in Melbourne next week, had nothing to spare at the death.

Alex Corretja, the No 1 seed, joined Martin in the semi-finals when Albert Costa was forced to withdraw through injury. Corretja, of Spain, led 6-3, 4-6, 2-0 when his compatriot damaged a tendon in his right knee. The results of X-rays taken overnight will determine whether Costa can play in the Open next week, when he is due to be seeded No 12.

Two years ago, Venus Williams thought that tennis was an easy game. Endorsements abounded as the loose-limbed teenager climbed the world rankings without as much as a stumble. Now, Williams has established herself, but she has yet to scale the highest peaks. The suspicion has arisen that she is something of a bully: she positively crushes inferior opponents, but comes up short against the best, often through a failure of nerve.

So it was yesterday against Steffi Graf, always a regal presence but one now liberated from the burden of expectation that constricts Williams. This was a heavyweight contest in the purest sense, embracing lengthy rallies, many of burning intensity. In the end, however, Graf, who trailed 2-4 in the deciding set, kept the ball in play long enough for Williams to hand her the point.

"I might have just had a better attitude," Graf said after a splendid 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 triumph, "but I think it was more that she got a little tense. I have been in many tight situations, but now I feel the opposite of pressure. I actually enjoy being in that situation. I don't feel I have anything to lose any more. I feel that I am doing the right things."

Ominously for her opponents, Graf is still suffering from the stomach virus she contracted in Hong Kong last week and should improve further on reaching full strength. Whatever, her release from her self-imposed straitjacket has been evident to Lindsay Davenport, who squared up to Graf in the early hours this morning. "She is such a fighter," Davenport said, "and she looks like she enjoys playing so much more now than she used to."

The surprise package within the women's tournament has been Barbara Schett, who rallied strongly to beat Arantxa Sánchez Vicario 1-6, 6-1, 6-0. Schett, of Belgium, thus opposed Martina Hingis in the second semi-final after Hingis yesterday overran Schett's compatriot, Dominique van Roost, for the loss of one game.

Tim Henman sustained his second defeat in as many days at the Colonial Classic, an exhibition event in Melbourne. The Great Britain No 1 succumbed to Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, who came through 6-2, 1-6, 6-1 in a topsy-turvy contest. As has now become evident, Henman fails to rise to an encounter of exhibition status. His demeanour betrayed a distinct lack of interest in a contest notionally designed to prime him for bigger things.

If anything, Henman's early presence in the Melbourne may be having a detrimental effect. He has been seeded No 6 for the Australian Open next week. Greg Rusedski is two berths lower, at No 8, ahead of the draw today. Of the four British men in the qualifying competition, only Barry Cowan survived the opening round.

SEEDINGS

MEN

1, M Rios (Chile); 2, A Corretja (Sp); 3, P Rafter (Aus); 4, C Moyà (Sp); 5, A Agassi (US); 6, T Henman (GB); 7, K Kucera (Slovakia); 8, G Rusedski (GB); 9, R Krajicek (Holl); 10, Y Kafelnikov (Russ); 11, G Ivanisevic (Cro); 12, A Costa (Sp); 13, C Pioline (Fr); 14, M Philippoussis (Aus); 15, T Martin (US); 16, T Johansson (Swe).

WOMEN

1, L Davenport (US); 2, M Hingis (Switz); 3, J Novotna (Cz); 4, A Sánchez Vicario (Sp); 5, V Williams (US); 6, M Seles (US); 7, M Pierce (Fr); 8, P Schnyder (Switz); 9, C Martínez (Sp); 10, S Graf (Ger); 11, D van Roost (Bel); 12, A Kournikova (Russ); 13, I Spirlea (Rom); 14, S Testud (Fr); 15, N Zvereva (Bela); 16, A Coetzer (SA).

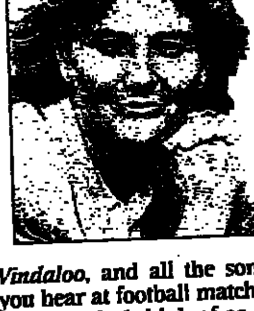


Medal success at the Commonwealth Games has given Buck the spur to regain her place as Britain's No 1. Photograph: Simon Brooke-Webb

Buck aims to add glorious chapter



SARAH POTTER



The first ranking tournament of the new tenpin bowling season took place in Wolverhampton last weekend and Pauline Buck, the oldest and most successful female member of the National Lottery-backed Team England squad, intends to prove she can once again be queen pin of the alleys.

Buck, 44, has been the leading lady for seven of the last eight years, but it was Kimberley Oakley who bowled over all before her in 1998 to become the British Tenpin Bowling Association's new No 1. However, with Buck's attentions fixed on an inaugural appearance in the Commonwealth Games, in which she claimed a bronze and silver medal, few would wager against the mother-of-two regaining her crown.

It is a game with which she has been besotted since her parents first took her bowling in South London in the late 1960s. "I was hooked from the start," she said. "We played in a family league and someone suggested I should enter a tournament in Hounslow when I was 14. I won the trophy and wanted more."

So it was that Buck spent an increasing amount of her teenage years at her local bowling centre. "It was somewhere I could go on my own," she said. "There weren't, and aren't, many places teenagers can do that. Now my kids, Gemma, 14, and Jason, 11, do the same. There aren't any drugs or abuse or sex offenders in a bowling centre."

It is also a game celebrating a new-found status. "Tenpin bowling was included in the Commonwealth Games for the first time last summer. Suddenly, people can't just say it's only a leisure industry. It was an amazing feeling, standing in the tunnel waiting to walk out for the opening ceremony, as one of the 472 people representing England. I was singing *Vindaloo*, and all the songs you hear at football matches, with people I think of as superstars. I'll never forget it."

She claims the bronze medal that she won as a partner of Gemma Burden, and the silver with Richard Hood, owed as much to the excitement of that curtain-raiser as their skills in the lanes. "Because bowling was one of the first competitions to get under way we were all on this amazing high. To be classed as athletes, with the likes of Denise Lewis, was fantastic and so motivating."

According to Buck, strength is not important in tenpin bowling. "Timing the ball from your hand to coincide with your footwork is vital," she said. "But it's mainly choosing the right ball at the right time and the drilled handholes help determine how the ball behaves. They are made from different types of resin and can be drilled numerous ways to go straight, hook early or hook late."

Buck's husband, Geoff — her coach since she was 16 — was himself England's top male player for five consecutive seasons, though he has not featured for the past three. "We've two pro shops, in Newbury and Guildford," she said. "all the balls come solid and Geoff does the measuring and drilling."

She took eight balls to Kuala Lumpar and would usually take six to a ranking tournament. "One will be what we class as a spare ball. That goes straight and is used for the pins in the corner. They cost about £50 and the ones we call front-line balls can be anything from £130 to £170 each. How much they hook also depends on the amount of oil put down."

Commonwealth gold may have slipped from Buck's grasp — Australia snatched it by a narrow margin — yet unfulfilled ambition is not a cloud to shade Buck's sunny disposition. "I felt before the Commonwealth Games that it would be lovely to finish my career with a medal of any colour," she said. "I won two and feel I've achieved everything I could ever have hoped for. I won't carry on when I'm not competitive, but yes, I fancy my chances to be the number one again."

Black falls short of shock win

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

JULIE HALARD-DECUGIS fought off a match point before winning five straight games to reach the semi-finals of the Tasmanian International women's tournament in Hobart yesterday.

The French top seed's great escape came at the expense of Cara Black, the unseeded Zimbabwean, who is the sister of Davis Cup players Wayne and Byron. Black looked the more likely winner of the two hour 26-minute match before succumbing 3-6, 7-5, 7-5, despite leading 5-2 and 40-30 on serve in the deciding set.

She wasted the match point with a tentative push and it proved to be her last chance. Thereafter Halard-Decugis' big forehands increasingly found their range as Black's game dissolved.

Halard-Decugis now plays Chanda Rubin in the semi-final, the American having come from a set down to beat Sarah Pitkowski of France 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. Rita Grande, of Italy, and Amy Frazier, of the United Staes, play in today's other match. Grande reached the last four by beating third seed Virginia Ruano-Pascual 6-2, 6-1 while Frazier beat Nathalie Dechy 6-3, 6-1.

Korda's lawyers launch challenge

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT

LAWYERS acting for Petr Korda lodged a High Court action in London yesterday challenging whether the International Tennis Federation (ITF) has the right to appeal against the player escaping a one-year ban after testing positive for steroids at Wimbledon.

"The matter is completely in the hands of my lawyer," Korda said in Melbourne. "We want to find out whether the ITF can appeal against its own decision."

Korda escaped the expected one-year sanction when an independent appeals committee, appointed by the ITF, ruled last month that the player had established "exceptional circumstances", in that he did not know how metabolites of nandrolone were present in a urine sample he submitted on July 1.

However, the ITF, prompted by widespread player concern, has appealed against the ruling in an effort to trigger the ban. The ITF's case will be heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland. A verdict is expected within four months.

Korda, of the Czech Republic, is preparing to defend his Australian Open title, but several players have expressed bewilderment at the apparent leniency of his treatment. All men competing at the Australian Open in Melbourne have been summoned to a players meeting tomorrow, where they will press for further details of Korda's case.

"I don't think we know everything that is going on," Todd Martin, president of the players' council, said yesterday.

"It is a terrible position for tennis and Petr Korda to be in. I am sure some players will raise a fairly big stink, but we will have to reserve judgment until we find out more about how the appeals committee came to its judgment."



Korda: leagal fight

NETBALL

Jackson targets champions

BY CATHY HARRIS

MAGGIE JACKSON, the Bedfordshire coach, is not worried that her team are rated as very much the underdogs when they face the champions, Essex Met, in the English Counties League at Luton tomorrow.

Bedfordshire are unbeaten this season, but trail the pace setters, Middlesex, on goal average with Jackson admitting that the title-holders in 1997 have not won convincingly since beating East Essex in their first game in the championship. She said: "We simply have to win to keep alive our hopes of regaining the title."

Bedfordshire, who have seven former internationals, including Kendra Slawinski, the former England captain, in their squad, will rely on solid defence to frustrate Essex Met. "We'll be looking to cut off their possession before they get into the circle," Jackson said.

The Essex Met line-up includes Commonwealth Games bronze medal-winners Amanda Newton, Lorraine Law and Fiona Murtagh, who captained England in Kuala Lumpur and whose leadership qualities will be crucial tomorrow.

Murtagh hopes to last the match after recovering from recent knee surgery, and is particularly looking forward to the contest against Slawinski. "She's superb at the psychological games as well as making her presence felt in the physical sense," Murtagh said, "but I'll be doing exactly the same."

Derbyshire should be confident of maintaining their challenge when they meet East Essex, the bottom club, while Middlesex travel to Surrey hoping to consolidate their position at the top of the table.

The All England Netball Association have agreed that the fixtures between Derbyshire and Bedfordshire, and Middlesex and Essex Met can be rearranged because four England players, Naomi Siddall and Olivia Murphy, of Derbyshire, Helen Lonsdale, of Middlesex, and Newton, will be involved in a cup competition in New Zealand in March and April.

SAILING

Percy still hopeful of third in Finn class

BY EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

IAIN PERCY scored his third race win in the Finn Gold Cup at the world sailing championships in Melbourne yesterday and is in a good position to secure third overall as he goes into the last race today.

Percy's performances in Melbourne confirm the view of his coaches that an Olympic medal in this single-handed discipline is well within his grasp. Although only in his second year in the class Percy, 22, has eclipsed Richard Stenhouse, who represented Britain in Savannah and who finished third in the European championships last year.

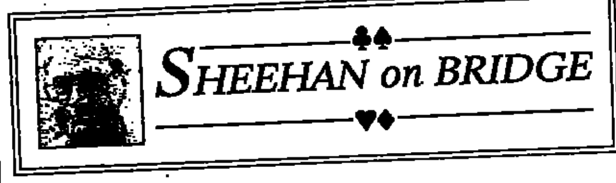
He trails the leader, Mateusz Kusnierewicz, of Poland, the Olympic gold medal-winner and defending world champion, by 19 points and Frederik Loof, of Sweden, in second place by 15. Although the runners-up spot is now out of his grasp, third is there for the taking despite a 15th place in the second race yesterday.

Percy's scores tell a tale of inconsistency with five top-five finishes mixed in with five in the teens including two nineteenth places. Kusnierewicz, by contrast, has only been in the teens once in ten starts.

"My goal was top five," Percy said. "The two in front of me looked better on paper, whereas those behind me I knew I could beat. I'm generally one of the quickest and, with a seven-point buffer, I should be OK with third," he added.

In the 49ers, the Budgen brothers have regained the top spot among the British crews and are in fifth place after the first five races in the gold fleet. Paul Brotherton and Neal McDonald are ninth while Tim Robinson and Ian Walker are 15th.

In the Soling class, Andy Beadsworth, Barry Parkin and Richard Sydenham have slipped back from sixth to eighth while Lawrie Smith, Ossie Stewart and Rob Cruickshank are now seventeenth.



BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Begin Bridge with *The Times*:
Lesson 39 – Responding Two of a Suit

A couple of weeks ago I looked at responding One of a Suit to a one-level opening bid. I said that such a response showed 6 or more HCP. Last week I wrote about the One No-Trump response which is what you bid when you have 6-9 HCP and no major suit to bid. I also looked at stronger balanced hands where you could make a jump response in no-trumps. This leaves us with hands of 10 or more HCP (or 9 with a five-card suit) without a suit that can be bid conveniently at the one level.

What do you respond to One Heart with these hands?

	(A)	(B)	(C)
♠	A 4 3	K 4 3	6 5
♥	8 7	9 8	6
♦	A K 7 6 3	Q J 6 5	A K 7 5 4
♣	9 6 4	A 10 6 5	A J 8 6 5

	(D)	(E)	(F)
♠	K 4 3	K 4 3	4 3
♥	9 8 3	9 8	K Q 7 6
♦	A Q 6 5	A Q 6 5	A Q 6 5 3
♣	A J 6	A K 6 5	J 5

With *Hand (A)* there is no problem. You have enough for a two-level response and one good five-card suit. Simply respond Two Diamonds.

With *Hand (B)*, even though you have a balanced hand with no five-card suit, you are too strong for One No-Trump. With two four-card suits you should start with the lower. Respond Two Clubs, leaving partner room to bid diamonds next time if he has four.

With two five-card suits, as on *Hand (C)*, both of which you intend to bid, it is best to start with the higher and bid your second suit on the next round. Bid Two Diamonds. When you bid Three Clubs on the next round partner can easily show you delayed diamond support.

Last week I told you what to bid with *Hand (D)* - Three No-Trumps, showing 13-15 HCP in a balanced hand with three-card support for hearts.

Hand (E) is too strong for Three No-Trumps and has insufficient heart support. But there is no need to panic. If you respond in a new suit, it is *forcing*. Partner will not pass and you can hear more about his hand before deciding on the final contract. Bid Two Clubs.

On *Hand (F)* you should raise partner straight away with your good support. You have enough for game so go straight to Four Hearts.

□You can get a copy of any lesson from this beginners' course by sending two 26p stamps per lesson (or five stamps per set of five) to Sally Brock, 73 Totteridge Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7QA. Don't forget to state which ones you want.

□Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

PILGER
a. To complain
b. To reduce a tube
c. A tropical bird

QUANK
a. The cry of a gnu
b. A hypothetical particle
c. Queen's College graduate

PAWANG
a. A sorcerer
b. A single-tree canoe
c. A tribal elder

RINKY-TINK
a. A skaty-bopper
b. A mongoose
c. A piano

Answers on page 50

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Youngest qualifier

Two more games today from Murugan Thiruchelvam, 10, who has become the youngest qualifier for a national championship final.

White: Thiruchelvam
Black: Lamb
Fulprint York Open 1999
French defence

	White	Black
1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	e5	c5
5	a3	Bxc3+
6	bxc3	Ne7
7	Nf3	Bd7
8	Bd3	Ba4
9	0-0	Qa5
10	Bd2	Nbc6
11	Qb1	Qc7
12	Bb5	Bxb5
13	Qxb5	cxd4
14	cxd4	0-0
15	Qd3	h6
16	Nh4	Na5
17	f4	Nc4
18	Rf3	f6
19	Bb4	fxe5
20	dxe5	Rf7
21	Bxe7	Qxe7
22	Ng6	Qc5+
23	Kh1	Rc8
24	f5	exd5
25	Rxd5	Ne3
26	Rxf7	Kxf7
27	e6+	Kxe6
28	Re1	d4
29	Nf4+	Kf7
30	Qg6+	Kg8
31	Ne6	Qe5
32	Nxd4	Rc3
33	Ne6	Rc8
34	h3	Black resigns

Diagram of final position

White: Thiruchelvam
Black: Ellison
Fulprint York Open 1999
Sicilian defence

	White	Black
1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	e6
3	c4	Nc6
4	Nc3	d6
5	Be2	Nf6
6	0-0	Be7
7	d4	cxd4
8	Nxd4	0-0
9	Be3	Nxd4
10	Bxd4	Bd7
11	f4	Bc6
12	Bf3	Qa5
13	a3	e5
14	b4	Qc7
15	Be3	exf4
16	Bxf4	Qb6+
17	Kh1	Bd7
18	Qd3	Be6
19	Nd5	Nxd5
20	exd5	Bd7
21	Rae1	Bf6
22	Be3	Qd8
23	Be4	g6
24	Bf4	Be5
25	Bxe5	dxe5
26	d6	Rb8
27	Bd5	Qg5
28	Qe4	Rbe8
29	Bxb7	f5
30	Qd5+	Be6
31	Qxe5	Bxc4
32	Qxe8	Rxe8
33	Rxe8+	Kg7
34	d7	Bxf1
35	d8Q	Bxg2+
36	Kg1	Qxd8
37	Rxd8	Black resigns

Keene online

You can send me your queries, puzzles, problems and games direct by email. The address is keenechess@aol.com. The best contributions from Times readers will be published either here or in the Saturday Times Weekend column.

Times book

The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in *The Times*, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01797 369966 at £6.99+p&p).

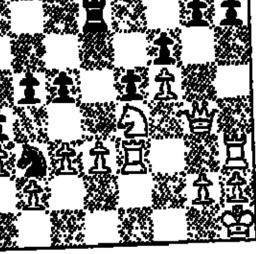
□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Ledger-Gullakson, Isle of Man, 1998.

How did White dismantle Black's kingside in fine style?



Solution on page 50

Bay of excitement dies down to a whisper

Basking and posing in the light of a famous victory is out for John Hollins and his Swansea charges, Rob Hughes reports

When the sun came up over Swansea Bay yesterday, the eleven players who basked the previous night in hero worship as the last true giant-killers of the 1999 FA Cup were back where they started — trudging through sand, running hard on the beach to convince John Hollins, the manager, that they have learnt the lesson: Cup glory is fleeting, the league is where they compete for a living.

Swansea City's defeat of West Ham United on Wednesday is without a doubt the achievement of the Cup so far this season. Fulham *paid* for their triumph over Southampton; Swansea crafted theirs out of players who are one step away from going out of league football; Rushden and Diamonds, though "non-league", are, courtesy of Doc Martens, better-heeled than many a club in the lower regions of the professional structure.

Indeed, as the wind and the passions swirled around the Vetch Field, the ability gap was bridged not by luck, not by effort alone, but by this realisation among Hollins' men that this was the chance of a lifetime. Harry Redknapp and Frank Lampard Sr, manager and assistant manager of West Ham, insisted that they could not fault their players on attitude, but that Swansea had won fair and square.

Why was this? Because West Ham, depleted through injuries, worked and ran like men to whom the FA Cup was one opportunity of the season; the other is to qualify for Europe. Swansea ran a little bit further, defended by putting their bodies on the line, because this was the night of opportunity of their sporting lives. And because the way the finances of football are going, the contraction of their industry, each and every man in Swansea white knows that the further they go in the Cup, the more likely what talent they possess has to be seen by somebody who will guarantee them a living.

It is as stark as that: West Ham, owners of talents such as Rio Ferdinand, Joe Cole, Frank Lampard Jr and Eyal Berkovic, pay annual wages in the region of £14 million. They may have to sell a player or three to stay in the contest with the plc clubs ruling the roost, but so long as they stay in the FA Carling Premiership, television income alone will sustain them on a level beyond Swansea.

For those drawn to the Vetch when the Eighties began, when the Swans flew upwards on four successive promotions to the pinnacle of the old first division, this withering of status, this dependence on Cup runs for survival, is terrifying. On Wednesday, it was tangible. The goal by Martin Thomas, the running on the wing by 18-year-old Stuart Roberts, the yeoman defending by Jason Smith and Matthew Bound, the centre backs, suggested that they were players intoxicated by the occasion, running on adrenalin, giving the performances of their lives.

"We wanted to show people outside Swansea what a good team we are," Roger Freestone, their Newport-born goalkeeper, said.

The manager wants them to show that in league performances as well. "I brought them all in this morning because I don't want last Saturday to happen again," Hollins, who, with Chelsea and England, achieved heights above any present Swansea player, said. "I'm not being a killjoy. We love all the publicity, television has been here non-stop and we don't turn anybody away. After the first game against West Ham in London, even I believed it; we weren't bad.

"Then Exeter set about us as if we were posers — manager and coaches included. We got well and truly done 4-0, and the reason we're back on the beach is to get our thinking right. Derby County, when it comes, will be terrific, but if we're not right against Cambridge United this Saturday they will be just as bloody hard as Exeter."

Two things crystalise Swansea's options. One was the rise, under John Toshack, that was faster than any club in league history, and the equally rapid plummet that followed. They had overspent and were spared insolvency partly through the generosity of Liverpool writing off fees for Colin Irwin and Ray Kennedy in 1982.

The other is embodied by Thomas, whose goal won the night against West Ham. Small and built like a bullock, middle-aged for a sportsman at 25, Thomas has experienced rejection by his home club, Southampton, by Leyton Orient and last summer by Fulham, who sought no fee for him after he had made just four league appearances last season, all as substitute.

When, from the edge of the penalty area, Thomas saw West Ham, for all the experience of Neil Ruddock, Tim Breacker and Julian Dicks, and all the precocity of Ferdinand, hesitant before him, he let fly a right-foot shot that deserved its famous victory. They will not, down Swansea way, compare Thomas to Ivor Allchurch or Cliff Jones or Mel Charles, for they have seen — indeed Swansea once bred — some of the most hypnotic skills the game has known. But they will remember his shot.

There was pain in Redknapp's eyes on Wednesday, but he goes back to wheel and deal on a level that Swansea may never be able to attempt again. Redknapp and his partner Lampard, Eastenders to their roots, departed from the Vetch Field puzzled by the history that made West Ham FA Cup winners in 1964, 1975 and 1980, yet shows Claret turning to water as they have been eliminated by Stockport County, Hereford United, Torquay United, Wrexham and now Swansea.

It is the magic of the Cup. One year you go all the way, the next you are as brittle as any of the elite can be. Sorry Harry, but long may it continue.



REVISED FOURTH-ROUND DRAW
Sheffield Wednesday v Stockport; Wolverhampton Wdrs v Arsenal; Bristol Rovers v Leyton Orient; Wrexham v Huddersfield; Portsmouth v Leeds; Oxford v Chelsea; Sheffield United or Notts County v Cardiff; Swindon or Barnsley v Bournemouth; Newcastle v Bradford; Leicester v Coventry; Aston Villa v Fulham; Blackburn v Sunderland; Swansea v Derby; Manchester United v Liverpool; Wimbledon v Tottenham; Everton v Ipswich.
☐ Ties to be played January 23, 24 and 25

Leaver bids to put cap on salaries

FROM ANDREW WARSHAW IN CANNES

PETER LEAVER, the chief executive of the Premier League, yesterday lent his support to proposals to cap the salaries of Europe's highest-paid footballers in order to stop wages spiralling out of control. Speaking at the end of the Football Expo trade fair here, attended by more than 1,000 of the game's leading figures, Leaver said placing a limit on salaries could be the most effective way of stopping clubs spending beyond their means.

With more and more out-of-contract players demanding high wages, fears are growing across Europe that unless salaries are controlled, some clubs risk going bankrupt, especially second-tier teams trying to force their way into the expanded and lucrative Champions' League, which will be introduced next season.

Leaver said that he would be in favour of salary capping, provided there was unanimity across Europe. "Salary capping is something we are constantly discussing," he said. "It's a nice idea, but we in England could not do it on our own. We'd be cutting off our noses to spite our faces. It would need a concerted effort among all European associations to achieve it."

Citing the crisis in American basketball this season, when players went on strike over plans to restrict their earning power, Leaver warned that any proposal to introduce salary capping would have to have the support of the European Commission in Brussels. Otherwise, he said, clubs could sue for restraint of trade.

Jacques Thebault, general manager of the French league, said wages in his country were also getting out of control. "I know of no serious business that could keep pace with the increases," he said. "We can't continue to move in the direction of 20 per cent annual wage hikes. It's suicidal."

Michel Zen Ruffinen, the general secretary of Fifa, said that, in the wake of the Bosman ruling, the game's world governing body was considering setting up a sub-committee to look into all areas of transfer activity and spiralling wages. However, he said the idea of salary capping needed alot more thought.

"At the moment, Fifa has about 400 litigation cases. It's frightening," he said. "If salary capping has any chance, we have to make sure that the rules comply with those in Brussels."

Meanwhile, Leaver has invited Sepp Blatter, the Fifa president, to London on February 10 for talks aimed at streamlining the European fixture calendar in the wake of Blatter's suggestion to stage a World Cup every two years.

Like most of his counterparts across Europe, Leaver is increasingly concerned about fixture congestion. If something isn't done about it soon, he said, football risked losing its present popularity.

"We can't keep flying by the seat of our pants," Leaver said. He suggested a ten-year schedule of national and club matches. "We have to open a dialogue with Fifa, work out a plan and stick to it. It is absolutely vital to strike the right balance. Otherwise, we are in danger of killing the goose that laid the golden egg."

That argument also applies to the World Cup, according to at least three confederations who are expected to oppose Blatter's controversial idea to stage the tournament every two years.

The first meeting to discuss the proposal takes place at the headquarters of Fifa today and seems certain to be opposed by Gerhard Aigner, the general secretary of Uefa, the governing body of European football, which has argued fiercely against the idea, and by South America and Asia.

ANDREW HASSON



Horton has exceeded expectations on his return to Brighton, who are scheduled for a homecoming of their own at Withdean Stadium in March

Horton yearns for home comforts

Nick Szczepanik meets the travel-weary manager who has helped to transform Brighton into promotion contenders

For football managers, working at a club where you were a popular player can be a risky business. The reservoir of goodwill can run dry quickly if results are poor. In the case of Brian Horton, the risk was greater than most.

In February, he was offered the managership of Brighton and Hove Albion, the club that he had captained in the late Seventies as they rose from the old third division to the top flight for the first time in their history. But now they were homeless and, with only Doncaster Rovers below them, pretty hopeless, too. "It was one of the big things I had to think about," Horton said. "Did I want to be the man that captained them from the third to the first, then took them out of the league?"

Today, the decision looks a sound one, with Brighton, who have finished 91st in the Nationwide League for the past two seasons, occupying one of the third division playoff positions. Victory in the televised game away to Chester City tonight would take them into sixth place.

"We've done fantastic, but we shouldn't accept that it's good enough," Horton said. "We think: 'This is great, a hundred times better than the last four seasons'. But now that we're there, we've got to try and make the most of it."

In hindsight, Horton was well qualified. He had already done one impossible job, managing Manchester City to the dizzy heights of sixth in the FA Carling Premiership as recently as December 1994. He began his resuscitation of Brighton by ensuring that they retained league status with 12 points from the final 12 games of last season, then persuaded the directors to allow him to improve the squad.

He augmented the funds that they provided with some shrewd wheeler-dealing, selling on Paul Holsgrove, a free-transfer signing, to Hibernian for a six-figure profit before he had kicked a ball for Brighton. Among the newcomers who stayed are Gary Hart, the leading goalscorer — suspended tonight — who was bought from Stansted for £1,000, Ian Culverhouse, the experienced and influential sweeper, and Rod Thomas, signed from Chester at a knockdown fee.

The improvement supports Horton's belief that good players can overcome any lack of facilities — just as well, given Brighton's continuing handicap of playing home games at Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium. Although Withdean Stadium, a 1,000-seat athletics facility in Brighton, is being converted into a temporary 6,000-seat ground, to be ready in March, the club remains very different from the one that Horton knew as a player.

"It's totally unrecognisable: no ground, no base, no heart to the club," he said. "I found that very difficult because the Goldstone [the club's former home] was a magnificent place, a very homely ground, and with 30,000 in it was magnificent. We hardly lost a game in my four years there. We've already lost six at Gillingham this season. It is a drawback, but you can't make that an excuse."

To counter the effect, the team set a club record with five successive away wins before Christmas, which shot them into unexpected contention, but their impressive form on the road will be tested tonight.

The tricky fixture at the Deva Stadium against an improving Chester side will be the third "Fans United" game, an idea originally promoted two seasons ago by Brighton supporters. Horton has only praise for them — "without them, the club would definitely have gone under" — especially the 4,000 or so who made the 150-mile round trip to see the "home" defeat by Carlisle United last Saturday. He hopes that television coverage will inspire his players to give a better account of themselves tonight. "I tell them to aim higher, not just for me but for themselves," he said. "I'm pleased to see free transfers like Michael Bennett and Tony Browne, and non-league players like Gary Hart, doing well. My players are earning good win bonuses at the moment. I think they're enjoying it."

If they keep earning those bonuses, the team should still be well placed on its return to Brighton, scheduled for March 27. Horton knows the Withdean site well. He lived nearby as a player and took some early steps in management there. "I ran a Sunday side for four or five years when I was here before and they used to train and play there," he said. "We won two promotions and a cup — not a bad omen."

Venables wants £1m to end role as manager

BY MATT DICKINSON

TERRY Venables last night reached a settlement to stand down as manager of Crystal Palace with a payoff believed to be worth at least £1 million. The former England coach spent most of the day in negotiations with Mark Goldberg, the club owner, haggling over his departure, which comes less than eight months into a five-year contract.

Goldberg will raise the funds to pay off Venables by selling Matt Jansen, the club's promising forward. Newcastle United, Arsenal and Blackburn Rovers have all registered interest in the young striker who will be sacrificed by the Nationwide League first division side in order to help Goldberg through a financial crisis.

While Jansen is expected to move for around £4.5 million, Palace supporters cannot expect any of that money to be put back into the club. Ron Noades, the former chairman, is due a sizeable sum as are Carlisle United, Jansen's former club. The player is also owed money from Palace, and the £2 million or so left will be used to pay off Venables and his entourage of Ted Buxton, Terry Fenwick and Dave Butler, all of whom are expected to leave Selhurst Park.

Nottingham Forest want to resurrect a deal to sign Carlton Palmer from Southampton in time to for him play in the FA Carling Premiership game against Arsenal tomorrow.

Peter Shreeves, the assistant manager, said that the former England midfield player was trying to negotiate the terms of a departure from Southampton, where he has 18 months of his contract remaining.



Palmer: transfer still on

The clubs have agreed a fee, believed to be £1 million, but the transfer stalled earlier in the week over personal terms. Shreeves, was adamant yesterday that the deal was not "dead in the water".

If Palmer does arrives today then he will beat Ron Atkinson to the City Ground. The new manager, who has been on holiday in Barbados, was expected to make a grand entrance on Saturday, but he may well leave Shreeves in full control for the game with Arsenal.

Steve McManaman has an outside chance of being fit for Liverpool's FA Cup trip to Manchester United on January 24. The England midfield player has not played since the victory over Newcastle on December 29, when he received an ankle injury after a tackle from the German midfield player, Dietmar Hamann, later described by the Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier as "very nasty". That game was McManaman's comeback after missing ten games with an Achilles problem.

Houllier hopes, too, that defender Steve Staunton may also have recovered from a groin strain to play at Old Trafford, although he will definitely miss tomorrow's home game against Southampton.

Youth Cup disrupted by weather

BY JOHN GOODBODY

EVERTON, the holders of *The Times* FA Youth Cup, were yesterday given an away draw in the fifth round, provided they beat Swindon Town in the uncompleted fourth round.

With even some third-round matches still to be finished because of bad weather, Everton will go to either Sheffield Wednesday or Gillingham or Leicester City. In the third round Everton beat Manchester United 4-0 after a replay.

The only club definitely through to the fifth round are Queens Park Rangers, who beat Crewe Alexandra 1-0.

Romford, who have a new youth structure, are the only club from outside the Premiership or Football League who are still in the competition. They have yet to settle their third-round tie with Watford.

FIFTH ROUND: Newcastle United or Chelsea v Scunthorpe United or Middlesbrough; Ipswich Town or York City v Tottenham Hotspur or Walsall or West Ham United; Queens Park Rangers v West Bromwich Albion or Nottingham Forest or Sunderland; Blackburn Rovers or Sheffield United v Brighton and Hove Albion or Coventry City or Port Vale or Notts County; Preston North End or Arsenal v Charlton Athletic or Crystal Palace; Aston Villa or Huddersfield Town v Barnet or Hartlepool United or Watford or Romford; Sheffield Wednesday or Gillingham or Leicester City v Everton or Swindon Town; Millwall or Bolton Wanderers v Liverpool or Wimbledon.
☐ Ties to be played by March 13

Canvey prepare to flex their muscles

BY WALTER GAMMIE

CANVEY ISLAND emerged stronger and wiser from a chastening season in the Ryman League first division two years ago. They bounced back from immediate relegation as second division champions and are lying fourth in the table. Tomorrow, they flex their new-found muscle by travelling to Cheltenham Town in the first round of the FA Umbro Trophy.

Canvey's first brush with the Trophy was in keeping with their disastrous league campaign — a home defeat by Heybridge Swifts at the first time of asking. This time round, they have already accounted for Wisbech Town and Evesham Town, of the Dr Martens League.

Jeff King, the Canvey manager, said: "It's a good day for the club. There's been a bit of a buzz around the place since the draw. The supporters haven't really been concentrating on anything else, although the players have been focused. When you consider the draw was made seven weeks ago it will be good for us all to be focused together on one match."

Canvey have established a solid pedigree in cup competitions, reaching the semi-finals of the FA Vase before losing to Tiverton Town in 1993 and enjoying their finest hour when holding Brighton and Hove Albion to a 2-2 draw in an FA Cup first-round tie at Park Lane in 1995. They also boast a solid core of former professionals in the ex-Southend United trio of Steve Tilson, Andy Sussex and Paul Williams, plus Danny O'Shea and Brian Horne, their goalkeeper.

"When we were in the first division before, we were almost a different club," King said. "Only three or four of the squad are still here — even though we were a good enough side for the division then. We had a lot of injury problems; we got on a downward spiral and couldn't get out of it. We certainly weren't the third worst side in the division that year."

The rise has been fast, four promotions in King's six years hoisting Canvey from the Essex Senior League. The club is in discussion with the Ryman League and the council about bringing their ground up to premier division status. "I want to get promotion," King said. "We'll take it from there. We are a very small club, financed by local business people. We're never going to be a Rushden or a Cheltenham."

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BOXING

Pizza Man casts ugly shadow for Botha


Lewis, the controversial trainer, watches his pupil work out

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT IN LAS VEGAS

WHITE hopes have long since lost the fight for credibility as world heavyweight championship contenders. Peter McNeeley saw to that. The Irish-American ate his way through here four years ago, pausing only to make a brief appearance as Mike Tyson's first opponent after his release from prison. He lasted little more than a minute, charging around the ring like a turkey to avoid being hit, before being disqualified, his manager leaping into the ring to save him from further punishment.

The locals in Las Vegas have not forgotten McNeeley. They remember him as the Pizza Man and his shadow has loomed large again this week, with François Botha in town, the South African becoming the latest white heavyweight to challenge Tyson on his return to the ring.

"Hey, he's not another Pizza Man is he?" somebody asked as they looked at a poster of Botha here. "You remember McNeeley? They signed him up for pizza commercials after that fight with Mike Tyson."

It is not difficult to understand local suspicions towards Botha's bout with Tyson. The South African has been picked just as carefully as was McNeeley as the former world champion's first opponent after returning from exile, this time after the notorious ear-biting incident in Tyson's last contest, against Evander Holyfield.

There is one difference, however: Botha has been chosen to avoid the embarrassment that McNeeley caused. He is believed to be durable and capable of putting up a fight. He is a "name", having held the International Boxing Federation title, before being disqualified for using steroids. Needless to say, is not considered to be a big puncher.

Botha, who has only one defeat in 40 contests, is happy to be seen as the "opponent". He is getting a nice payday of $1.8 million and is quietly confident of causing an upset. "It doesn't bother me because I have nothing to lose," he said. "If I lose, people will say: 'I told you so'. People don't expect anything of me. I've got great expectations of myself. My victory is going to be so much sweeter because no one gives me a chance."

Botha has been sparring with some good men — Orlin Norris, who will be boxing Herbie Hide in February, Garing Lane and Mark Young — so he can be expected to be in good shape. He has certainly looked motivated in the gym.

Yet, although the South African has long been among the top ten contenders, thanks to the influence of his former promoter, Don King, he is not considered to be truly world-class. Most of his 39 victims are little known, while the best he has faced are Axel Schulz, of Germany, and Michael Moorer. The bout with Schulz was a no-contest; Moorer stopped him in the twelfth round.

Botha, 30, was born on a farm outside Pretoria and started boxing at the age of 7. "After watching Muhammad Ali beating Foreman, I said to my dad: 'One day, I'm going to be the heavyweight champion of the world'."

Yet, after losing his first five "contests" at that tender age, he almost hung up his gloves. "You might say it was a rather inauspicious beginning for someone wanting to be a world champion," Botha said. "People thought I would quit, but I never thought I'd give up." By the age of 13, he had won 13 junior light-heavyweight titles and, at the end of his amateur career, he had lost only 25 contests out of 405. He turned professional in 1990 and, after winning his first two bouts, moved to the United States.

In 1992, he had the unique distinction of boxing three opponents on the same night, dispatching all three in the first round. The Tiger then became known as The Bomb — but when Botha moved to box for King, he became the White Buffalo. These days, Botha, who has settled in Newport Beach, California, with his wife, Elsje, and two children considers himself to be an African-American and says: "I'm white, but I can fight."

Technically, his boxing began to take shape four years ago when he came under the care of Panama Lewis, an eccentric genius. Lewis gained notoriety when he was sent to prison 15 years ago for removing the stuffing from the gloves of his boxer, Luis Resto, a light-middleweight, and as a result causing severe injuries to Danny Collins, who died nine months later in a car crash, an accident that was linked to the trauma that he suffered in the ring. Lewis's licence was revoked and he has still not got it back. He is not allowed to be in Botha's corner, but no doubt his voice will be heard.

"Tyson's going to be frustrated," Lewis said. "Black fighters don't like to lose to white fighters. But Botha is a white guy who fights like a black man. Tyson's going to find out, like Joe Louis did when he fought Max Schmeling."

Botha is confident of springing a surprise when he steps into the ring with Tyson

RUGBY UNION

Midfield will be key to unlock defences

GERALD DAVIES

Rugby Union Commentary

This is the time of year when attention is drawn to the Five Nations championship. Although the dates were changed last season, traditionally this weekend marked the start of the glorious winter jamboree, so long the temple of our rugby worship. Now that it has been shifted back to the start of February, and with every likelihood that it will be put back even farther, let us pray that the Five Nations will remain a cause of celebration.

The modernists, who have yet to convince anyone of the clarity of their purpose, or that they are on the right track, believe that this high-class tournament should be pushed to the tail end of the season, to April or May. Such a move may ultimately happen in order to rationalise the fixtures, but it would be done, nonetheless, at some risk. Having evolved without any real plan — after all, the home unions only recognised it officially as a fully-fledged competition a few years ago — the tournament, despite all the misgivings, remains the most colourful and most cherished of all rugby championships.

To enter into this premature reverie of anticipation is, in part, a necessary antidote to the constant misery that has enveloped rugby. To contemplate what lies ahead allows us to escape, however fleetingly, the ashen faces and the strained smiles of the men who purport to have the interest of the game at heart. If the Five Nations championship, with all its delightful idiosyncrasies, were to give us a reminder of rugby's potential for fun and joy, and to jolt us into realising what we are in danger of losing, then the fear lingers that once it is all over, rugby's administrative dilemmas will, sadly, still be with us. Rugby's potential to be the country's second-biggest spectator sport has yet to be realised.

There are those — most of us — who regret that the overall standard of play does not match that of the southern hemisphere. Some complain that the games are not as flowing as they should be. But each year the tournament comes around, each year the anticipation is the same. We must simply keep our fingers crossed that the players' gifts and the teams' expertise will match the passion.

But what of the rugby itself? The universal view is that the tournament is likely to be the most evenly-contested for years, and that England and France might no longer have it all their own way. This has emerged over the past few months, after the four home countries' encouraging performances against South Africa, with England's victory still proving that they remain ahead of the pack.

With the French clubs not having performed with great conviction in the European Cup, they may no longer be thought of as perching on a high, unreachable pedestal. However, their luminous masterclass of a performance against Wales last April indicated how they can reach those parts of which others can only dream. They will not, however, relish the prospect of their first match in Dublin. Irish rugby has been given a huge boost by Ulster's performance in reaching the European Cup Final, which will, no doubt, inspire rampant optimism for the visit of France.

It is in considering France that we can recognise what qualities may be required to become the champions this year. There is need for creative intelligence and soft hands in midfield, and the kind of will 'o the wispiness shown by Lamaision, Glas and Castaignède last season. With so much destructive power around the fringes, where the forwards ply their trade, and with so much emphasis on gaining the "hard" yards, it is the team that will be able to find and create gaps in midfield that ought to rise to the top. England did so against Wales last season, but rarely flowed so easily thereafter. Power will be matched by power. It will be the team that can set the midfield three that ought to win the tournament.

To achieve this gets increasingly problematical since possession from the lineout and scrums are so predictable and the advantages almost always in favour of the team throwing in. Defences are prepared and more structured, and knowing what to expect denies the elements of surprise.

For Wales recently, both Gibbs and Taylor, in their different passion, found ways beyond the opposition defence. At the end of Neil Jenkins' variety of passes, long or short, both centres thrived. But the player who provides the additional attacking options for Wales is Shane Howarth, at full back. Teams need players such as this to make things happen in midfield.

Bedford guard against prying and preying kind

BY MARK SOUSTER

AS A high-powered delegation from the Rugby Football Union and clubs heads to Paris today for a meeting with their French counterparts to discuss the future of the European Cup, Twickenham will continue to consider its response to the International Rugby Board's latest disciplinary action. The union's management board sat in emergency session yesterday to formulate a defence against the charge of conduct prejudicial to the game.

On the domestic front, Bedford said they intend to call a meeting next Tuesday of the top four clubs in the second division of the Allied Dunbar Premiership and the bottom four in the first division to discuss a joint strategy should an Anglo-Welsh league be formed. A club official said: "There are very good reasons for us to get together."

Certainly Bedford are concerned that a whispering campaign is being waged against the club by individuals looking to take advantage of their parlous financial state. Frank Warren, the club's owner, has been ordered to pay Don King, the American boxing promoter, £7.2 million over an unspecified number of years. Warren is understood to be in America for the Tyson-Botha fight in Las Vegas this weekend, but a spokesman for Sports Network, his company, said yesterday it is "business as usual".

However, Sale were surprised to learn yesterday that their league fixture against Bedford tomorrow had already been called off because Goldington Road, apparently, is waterlogged. The game has been rescheduled for January 30, by which time Kevin Ellis might have left the club. The Welsh scrum half was placed on the transfer list yesterday as John Mitchell looks to trim his squad before recruiting a prop forward. John Devereux, the former Wales international centre, was another who passed through the Heywood Road revolving door; he joined Worcester on loan.

Will Carling has revealed that he is planning a comeback. The former England captain said he expected to join a club abroad this year before, perhaps, returning to play here. "I have two or three options where I might start again. There are still a few things I want to do in rugby," Carling, 33, said. One suggestion is that he might go to Japan in the short term.

FENCING: RETIRING HEAD OF BRITISH ASSOCIATION FORESEES BRIGHT FUTURE

Chambers steps down as president

BY JOHN GOODBODY

JAMES CHAMBERS has resigned as president of the British Fencing Association (BFA) after more than five years of revolution in the sport. The concentration on youth and the impact of the National Lottery in funding elite competitors are already beginning to bring results and may bring further success, if not in the Olympics next year, at least by the 2004 Games.

Chambers, 56, a professional author, has had to retire early because he has to concentrate on completing a biography this year on Palmerston, the former Prime Minister.

He has overseen the new funding arrangements, which have been complicated during his office, when the former Sports Council split into the English and UK Sports Councils. In 1997, during the changeover, there was also a spell when all Olympic sports were underfunded and two extra coaches from the Continent had to return home because their salaries could not be paid. The BFA had backing from the British Olympic Association, though, and the UK Sports Council gave £47,000 to help fund the youth squad.

Concentrating on foil, four competitors were in the top ten in the world by the time they reached 20 years old, and two more will shortly reach this status. Chambers said: "There is definitely a prospect of a team medal in 2004."

He believes, too, that epéeist Georgina Usher could get close to a medal in Sydney "with a fair wind behind her".

Tomorrow, the BFA board will consider how to replace Chambers. An immediate election might rule out Penny Spinks, 60, who is particularly busy. She stood against Chambers in 1993, when she was seen to represent the regions, as opposed to London. The board may delay the election. Other leading candidates are: Lady Cooksey, a former international; John Crouch, the BFA ombudsman; and Nick Norcliffe, who stood in 1996.

SPORT IN BRIEF

■ GOLF: Laura Davies tees off in the opening event of the 1999 US LPGA Tour today, the Healthsouth Inaugural Tournament, in Orlando, aiming to achieve successive tour victories after winning the final event of last season. There are 13 British players in the field, including Alison Nicholas, the 1997 US Open champion, and Lisa Hackney, the 1997 rookie of the year.

■ SKIING: Alain Baxter and Emma Carrick-Anderson, the men's and women's slalom champions, will be in action for the first time at the British Land national championships in Tignes, France, today. Junior members of the British Land alpine team yesterday inflicted defeat on their senior counterparts in the international team parallel slalom.

■ BADMINTON: Peter Knowles, the former English champion who was fined and banned for two months for abusing officials and causing damage at the Dutch Open, will make his comeback at the Liverpool Victoria national championships at Haywards Heath next month. Knowles had considered retiring from the game because of the severity of his punishment.

Ireland's young pretenders face stern French examination

THE IDENTITY of the champions of European rugby will be determined, both at first class and student levels, on January 30 in Dublin, (Michael Aylwin writes). And both contests will be conducted between Irish and French representatives.

Cynics might point to the non-participation of English clubs compromising the validity of the senior contest, but no such detractions can be levelled at the student version. The final of The Times Trophy will be conducted between University College, Cork (UCC) and Grenoble at Donnybrook on the morning of the senior final, and both teams have risen above the cream of European rugby to get there.



Grenoble, the present French champions, have had the harder draw. They beat Loughborough, perennially at the top of the English student scene, in the quarter-final in France in front of a crowd of 2,000, and then travelled to Richmond to beat Brunel, the English champions, 15-0 in the semi-final on Wednesday night.

UCC, having qualified ahead of Bristol, were given a home quarter-final against Northumbria, who had been weakened in the pool stages, losing several players to a local club, although it was not Newcastle Falcons, as was mistakenly reported in this column last week. Even at full strength, however, they lost 23-13 to UCC, who then went on to thrash Harper Adams, the surprise package of the tournament, 64-7 in the other semi-final in Cork.

The final is likely to be tight. Both teams have formidable athletes throughout. Grenoble, however, have several players that play their Saturday rugby with first-class clubs, who may not release them. If this is so, together with the partisan Irish crowd, UCC may have the edge.

Hunte reinforces Warrington ambition

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

RUGBY LEAGUE

ALAN HUNTE, the Great Britain three-quarter, joined Warrington Wolves from Hull Sharks yesterday on a three-year contract after a proposed move into rugby union fell through. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) had hoped to secure Hunte, 28, and Gary Connolly and Kris Radlinski, of Wigan Warriors, on full-time contracts and then hire them to leading clubs.

"There was a breakdown between the RFU and the clubs," Hunte said. "I'll probably never know how close it came, but I didn't lose sleep over it. I don't see it as an opportunity missed, but the Warrington deal may have been."

Hull's decision to release Hunte with a year left on his contract will reportedly save them £2,000 a week. Warrington's move for him followed a recent buy-out by a consortium backed by the Greenalls group. His signing represents a coup for the coach, Darryl Van de Velde, who lost out to St Helens when, at Castleford in 1988, he tried to sign Hunte as an amateur.

"The financial stability gives us an opportunity to plan for the future," Van de Velde said. "Last year we were treading water and had to shed players, but Alan's signing is a statement by the club. I believe we will be pushing for a top-five spot in Super League."

Hunte is Warrington's fifth recruit of the close-season, following the signings of Dean Busby, a former colleague at St Helens, and three Australians — Scott Wilson, Simon Gillies and Dean Hanger.

Lancashire Lynx, last year's second division champions, are to return to their original home at Victory Park, Chorley, after two seasons at Deepdale, the home of Preston North End. Mike Ford, the new player-coach of Bramley, has signed Richard Russell, 31, a former England hooker, released by Castleford, and Simon Wray, a wing, from Keighley Cougars.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Newcastle Eagles 66 Milton Keynes Lions 62. Uni-ball Trophy: Group A: Thames Valley Tigers 95 Leicester Riders 91

BOWLS

HOPTON-ON-SEA, Norfolk: World indoor championships: Singles: Preliminary round: J Ross (Ire) bt N Burkett (SA) 7-2, 7-5, 7-3. I Taylor (Aus) bt M Anstey (Wales) 7-3, 7-2, 2-7, 4-7, 7-3. N Kennedy (HK) bt S Posa (NZ) 7-4, 7-5, 6-7, 7-1; R Newman (Eng) bt R Thomson (NZ) 7-5, 7-2, 7-4.

CRESTA RUN

ESCALANTE CUP: 1, E Degiacomi (Switz) 127.65; 2, C Kopp (Switz) 128.73; 3, H Butt (Switz) 129.59; 4, A Barclay (GB) 130.07; 5, J-N Prade (Fr) 131.01; 6, F Burkard (Switz) 131.15

CRICKET

One-day international

New Zealand v India

WELLINGTON (New Zealand won toss): No result, match reduced to 32 overs per side

INDIA

S C Ganguly c Drum b Nash	0
S R Tendulkar st Parore b Larsen	45
R Dravid c Twose b Larsen	68
*M Azharuddin c Larsen b Cairns	52
A Jadeja not out	26
R R Singh not out	10
Extras (lb 2, w 3, nb 2)	7
Total (4 wkts, 32 overs)	208

†N R Mongia, N Chopra, A Kumble, J Srinath and B K V Prasad did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1, 2-84, 3-138, 4-195.

BOWLING: Cairns 7-1-30-1; Nash 6-0-26-1; Drum 6-0-46-0; Larsen 6-0-56-2; Harris 7-0-48-0.

NEW ZEALAND

B A Young not out	52
M J Horne c Mongia b Prasad	4
C D McMillan c Dravid b Srinath	14
R G Twose not out	12
Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 1)	7
Total (2 wkts, 12.1 overs)	89

C L Cairns, *D J Nash, C Z Harris, †A C Parore, C J Drum, D L Vettori and G R Larsen did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-11, 2-45

BOWLING: Srinath 4-0-22-1; Prasad 3-0-28-1; Singh 2-0-19-0; Kumble 2.1-0-9-0; Chopra 1-0-5-0.

Umpires: D M Quested and E A Watkin.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results

FA CUP: Third-round replays: Fulham 1 Southampton 0 (Fulham away to Aston Villa in fourth round). Leeds United 3 Rushden and Diamonds 1 (Leeds away to Portsmouth in fourth round); Swansea City 1 West Ham United 0 (Swansea at home to Derby County in fourth round).

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second division: Partick Thistle 2 Alloa Athletic 1.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE CUP: Second round: Boston 1 Stamford 0

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Barnet 3 Fulham 4; Swindon 1 Brentford 1; Watford 1 Chelsea 0.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Aston Villa 2 Derby 3. First division: Bolton 1 Coventry 1. League Cup: Group two: York 0 Hull 2. Group four: Huddersfield 1 Chesterfield 1. Group five: Stockport 1 Bury 2.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Bedlington 5 South Shields 0.

COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Feltham 4 Viking Sports 0

JEWSON LEAGUE: Premier division: Ipswich 1 Felixstowe Port and Town 2.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Hailsham 1 Eastbourne Town 2.

BELGIAN LEAGUE: Standard Liege 2 Lierse 2.

ITALIAN CUP: Quarter-final, first leg: Juventus 1 Bologna 2.

GOLF

JOHANNESBURG: South African PGA championship: Leading first-round scores (South Africa unless stated): 65: N van Rensburg. 67: E Els. 68: R Muntz (Holl), R Kaplan. 69: I Garrido (Sp), P Baker (GB), C Whitelaw, M McNulty (Zim), B Hughes, F Quinn Jr (US), S Webster (GB). 70: M Gronberg (Swe), P Broadhurst (GB), D Frost, F Lindgren (Swe), W Abery, D Carter (GB). 71: G Orr (GB), R Wessels, J Hobday, J Mellor (GB), A Wall (GB), M Mouland (GB), S Dunlap (US), N Henning, B Vaughan (US), G Levenson. Other scores: 72: P Sjoland (Swe). 73: J Sandelin (Swe), R Goosen. 74: M A Martin (Sp). 77: N Faldo (GB). 82: E Darcy (Ire).

ICE HOCKEY

SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE: Ayr Scottish Eagles 1 Sheffield Steelers 4; London Knights 6 Manchester Storm 2.

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Buffalo 2 St Louis 4; Washington 0 Philadelphia 3; Florida 3 Toronto 3 (OT); New York Rangers 4 New York Islanders 3 (OT); Phoenix 5 Pittsburgh 3; Anaheim 1 Calgary 2; San Jose 1 Dallas 2.

RUGBY UNION

THE TIMES TROPHY: Semi-finals: University College, Cork 64 Harper Adams 7; Brunel 0 Grenoble 15.

SCHOOLS SPORT

FOOTBALL: Premier League Trophy: Under-19: Humberside 3 Lincolnshire 1. Under-16: Humberside 3 Lincolnshire 2; West Midlands 5 Shropshire 1.

SAILING

MELBOURNE: World championships (after eighth day): Finn Gold Cup (after 10 races): 1, M Kusznierewicz (Pol) 31pts; 2, F Loof (Swe) 35; 3, I Percy (GB) 50. Other British placing: 9, D Mellor 91. 49er: Gold fleet (after six races): 1, M Larson and K Hall (US) 25pts; 2, A Beeshel and T Czislowski (Aus) 25; 3, E Lazich and E McNicol (Aus) 27. British placing: 5, A and I Budgen 42. 470 men: Gold fleet (after nine races, one discard): 1, B Petit and J F Cuzon (Fr) 43pts; 2, J Molund and M Rahm (Swe) 57; 3, G Philippe and T Cartou (Fr) 61. British placing: 18, N Rogers and J Glanfield 128. Silver fleet (after nine races): 1, P Foerster and B Merrick (US) 15pts; 2, K and K Nakamura (Japan) 49; 3, N Taylor and R Bradley (NZ) 52. British placing: 6, C Draper and D Newman 71. 470 women: Gold fleet (after eight races): 1, S and M Ward (Den) 22pts; 2, R Taran and O Pakholchik (Ukr) 38; 3, N V Dufresne and S Azon (Sp) 38. British placing: 24, K Nurton and B Watson 141. Soling (after seven races): 1, S Westergaard, J Bolsen Moller and B Westergaard (Den) 16pts; 2, J Schuemann, G Bahr and I Borkowski (Ger) 29; 3, R Haner, P van Niekerek and D de Ridder (Holl) 38. British placing: 8, A Beadsworth, B Parkin and R Sydenham 61.

CLIPPER ROUND-THE-WORLD RACE: Leg 2d (Galapagos to Hawaii; with miles to go): 1, Ariel (A Thomson) 1,050; 2, Seneca (R Dean) 1,097; 3, Chrysolite (T Hedges) 1,109; 4, Memnous (S Sollars) 1,140; 5, Taeping (N Fleming) 1,198; 6, Antiope (K Harris) 1,290; 7, Thermopylae (M Tod) 1,292.

TENNIS

MELBOURNE: Colonial Classic: Second round: T Enqvist (Swe) bt A Agassi (US) 6-3, 7-6; P Korda (Cz) bt G Ivanisevic (Cro) 7-6, 6-2; Y Kafelnikov (Russ) bt T Henman (GB) 6-2, 1-6, 6-2.

SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT: Men: Quarter-finals: T Martin (US) bt L Hewitt (Aus) 6-3, 6-7, 6-4; T Muster (Austria) bt J Stoltenberg (Aus) 3-6, 6-2, 6-3; A Corretja (Sp) bt A Costa (Sp) 6-3, 4-6, 2-0, ret; K Kucera (Slovakia) bt G Kuerten (Br) 3-6, 6-4, 6-1. Women: Quarter-finals: B Schett (Austria) bt A Sánchez Vicario (Sp) 1-6, 6-1, 6-0; M Hingis (Switz) bt D van Roost (Bel) 6-2, 6-0; S Graf (Ger) bt V Williams (US) 4-6, 6-2, 6-4; L Davenport (US) bt P Schnyder (Switz) 6-2, 6-3.

HOBART: Tasmanian International tournament: Quarter-finals: J Halard-Decugis (Fr) bt C Black (Zim) 3-6, 7-5, 7-5; R Grande (It) bt V Ruano-Pascual (Sp) 6-2, 5-1 ret; A Frazier (US) bt N Dechy (Fr) 6-3, 6-1; C Rubin (US) bt S Pitkowski (Fr) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

* denotes all-ticket

Nationwide League

Second division

Colchester v Wrexham (7.45)

Third division

* Chester v Brighton (7.45)

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Third-round replay: Notts County v Port Vale (7.30).

FOOTBALL LEAGUE YOUTH ALLIANCE: Midland Conference: Walsall v Shrewsbury (12.0). North West Conference: Bury v Preston (2.0); Wrexham v Rochdale (11.0). North East Conference: Hartlepool v Scunthorpe (12.0), Huddersfield v Grimsby (1.30).

FA PREMIER ACADEMY LEAGUE: Under-19: Millwall v Arsenal (11.0). Coventry v Ipswich (12.30).

RUGBY UNION

Welsh Challenge Trophy

Pool A

Aberavon v Canada (7.0)

Pool B

Newport v Romania (7.0)


ODD ANDERSEN

Els lines up a putt on his way to an impressive first round that belied his claims, on the eve of the tournament, that he was rusty

Els swings into old routine

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN JOHANNESBURG

THE first competitive round of a year can be a journey into the unknown. Not having played a tournament for several weeks, or months, players had little idea of how they would hit the ball on the first day of the Alfred Dunhill PGA Championship at Houghton. Rusty was a word that sprang to the lips of many. Clearly, though, as Ernie Els, Rolf Muntz and Nick Faldo demonstrated, there is rustiness and rustiness.

On Wednesday, Els had said that he felt rusty not having played serious golf since mid-December. Yet a 67, five under par, did not look like the play of a man who was out of practice. Els coped calmly enough with the defences that have been added to this course since Tony Johnstone won with a total of 17 under par in 1998 — the added length, the enlarging of greens and the introduction of new bunkers. Els is lying in second place, two strokes behind Nico van Rensburg.

To play well at Houghton, it is essential to be accurate from the tee. The kikuyu rough is thick and clinging. David Carter took a swing in it in practice and moved his ball only one foot. Els, who missed three fairways, carried a new four-wood and used it on several of the short par-four holes.

He was caught out by the rough only once. On the 2nd, his 11th, he hit a three-wood for accuracy from the tee and was angry with himself when his ball rolled into the rough. His anger was increased when he moved the ball only 20 yards with his next stroke and eventually took a six. Though that was Els's only lapse, it did have a knock-on effect, because, with half his mind on the events of the 11th, he was not concentrating properly on the 12th and three-putted.

"This rough is very fierce," Els said. "It is like a US Open course. Peter Baker hit his ball into rough on the right of the 18th green. I knew it was going to be difficult to find and so I marked it. Even so, it took us four minutes to find it."

Els was helped by his knowledge of a course over which he has played hundreds of rounds. The first was 16 years ago in a junior tournament. Rounds of 79 and 72 were good for a 13-year-old who was as thin as a bunker rake, but not good enough to beat Adriaan, his older brother, who won the competition by three strokes.

Faldo was another to use the word rusty, but after a disappointing round of 77, not before it. On the eve of the tournament, Faldo had been metaphorically pawing at the ground, impatient to start so that he could continue the good form that he had shown in his last two events in 1998.

"I did not want the year to end," Faldo said. "November and December were good months. They helped me forget all that had gone on before." But his play yesterday resembled so many of his rounds in 1998. Again and again, after he had he hit his ball, his shoulders slumped and his head fell as he saw what had happened to it. He was inaccurate from the tee and the fairway — and his putting was no great shakes either. He had seven bogeys and two birdies.

"My driver was off, my irons were off," Faldo said after taking 12 strokes more than the tournament leader. "I am struggling. I could not work out what was going wrong." He was asked whether it was a surprise to play so badly after his optimism on the eve of the tournament. "There are no surprises in this game any more, just disappointments," Faldo said lugubriously. He then did what he nearly always does when his golf swing is awry and headed off for an intensive session on the practice ground.


Van Rensburg follows the path of his tee shot on 9th

Muntz, like Els, talked of his lack of practice. He last played a competitive round near the beginning of November and then put his clubs in the garage. A 68 was a good score, therefore, for the former Amateur champion.

So was a 69 for Ignacio Garrido, because Garrido had a wretched 1998 and he had spent the past six weeks doing little but physical training. European golf needs Garrido back at his best, as he was in 1997, when he played well for much of the season and, particularly, in the Ryder Cup.

Again and again in golf one sees what happens to players after a good season. Pleased with their form but anxious to improve, they want to alter their swing. Garrido did just that last year, with disastrous results. The 26-year-old wanted to make his swing firmer and more solid and to be able to play better in the wind. An upright player, he strove to make his swing flatter and more rounded. He sought to change its rhythm, too.

This is dangerous stuff. There is a saying that golfers often use — if it ain't broke, don't fix it — and Garrido's game went from bad to worse. "At times, I played like a bad amateur," Garrido said. "I would take out my driver and wonder whether I was going to hit a fairway. At the English Open, I played seven holes with my driver and never used it again."

BOWLS

Kennedy brings colourful note to opening exchange

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

NOEL KENNEDY has been described as the Nigel Kennedy of bowls, a flamboyant dresser, and breaker of moulds. Dressed to kill, his balding head covered by a scarlet bandana, he certainly played a new tune on an old fiddle at Potters Leisure Resort in Norfolk yesterday.

Born in South Wales, but now proudly representing Hong Kong, Kennedy, 34, wore his heart ostentatiously on his sleeve, as he defeated Steve Posa, a 29-year-old from New Zealand, 7-4, 7-5, 6-7, 7-1, in the preliminary round of the world indoor singles championship.

Bowls has been regarded as a staid game for stoics ever since Sir Francis Drake phlegmatically delayed his appointment with the Spaniards in 1588, but Kennedy throws caution to the wind, in his dress, demeanour, and even his play.

Yesterday, there were ends when he played erratically with his first three bowls, grimaced, wiped his brow and sought consolation from spectators in the front row, before triumphantly drawing the shot with an inch-perfect final delivery.

It was as if he could only produce good bowls when under pressure. Such tactics are not be found in any coaching manual, but they served him well, although he will have to be more consistent if he hopes to beat Richard Corsie in the first round proper on Sunday.

Posa's compatriot, Robbie Thomson, turned in a spirited display against Robert Newman, but was worn down by the sheer consistency of the 23-year-old British champion, who won 7-5, 7-2, 7-4.

Worthing may be to bowlers what Wimbledon is to tennis players, but Griff Sanders, an eccentric 26-year-old from Torquay, will have a different purpose when he visits the resort today. Banned from Devon's outdoor greens for ten years, the former England Under-25 international will be putting his case to a five-man committee of English Bowling Association officials, in the hope that his sentence will be annulled — or at least commuted.

During the final stages of the South Western championships at Wellington in August, Sanders upset officials by writing a derogatory message on his scorecard, before returning it to the tournament director. He was also accused of using foul language on the green and of being rude to officials.

"I knew that I was crossing the line but I felt provoked, and meant every word of the message," Sanders said this week. "I expected to be disciplined, but ten years was surely way over the top."

Answers from page 45

PILGER

(b) In a rolling mill, the process of reducing the outside diameter of a tube without changing the inside diameter. The two rollers each have a semicircular groove of decreasing diameter passing round the circumference, so that in conjunction they form a circular hole through which the tube can be forced on a cylindrical mandrel, and which decreases gradually and increases suddenly in size during each revolution of the rollers.

QUANK

(a) Echoic. A representation of sounds made by animals and birds. Hence, as an intransitive verb, to utter such a sound. 1921: "He could even hear the nasal laugh of the zebra, the resonant Quank of the gnus, the rattle of horn against horn as the bucks made play."

PAWANG

(a) A Malay sorcerer or medicine man. A wizard or witch. A wise man or expert. "Contact with the spirit world is only made through the medium of the tribal pawangs or medicine-men."

RINKY-TINK

(c) A bit like a honky-tonk. US slang, designating a jazz or ragtime piano on which simple, repetitive tunes are played. Tinkling, jangling. Echoic, onomatopoeic, and imitative of rinkydink, US for something antiquated, worn out and worthless.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1. Rxh7+! Kxh7; 2. Nxf6+! gxf6; 3. Rh3+ and mates.

TELEVISION CHOICE

The loss of innocence

Scene: Junk
BBC2, midday

Melvin Burgess's novel about two 14-year-olds who plunge into heroin addiction, crime and prostitution was a controversial winner of the Carnegie Medal in 1997. Enid Blyton the story was not, but many wondered whether the loss of innocence in a book written for children need have gone so far. The BBC has decided to stoke the argument afresh by adapting *Junk* for its schools drama slot, though this is a subject which deserves to be seen and discussed far beyond the classroom. Daniel Newman, who is actually 22 but cleverly disguises the fact, and Jemima Rooper, play the youngsters. This first episode of three sees them cutting adrift from unhappy home lives, taking up with squatters in Bristol and getting their first taste of illusory freedom before beginning their horrific decline.

Garden Stories
BBC2, 8.30pm

Cilla Lynn reckons it is worse that a heroin addiction and says cheerfully that there is no known cure. She is talking about gardening, in a programme devoted to horticultural obsessives. Her husband, fortunately, shares her passion, and they admit that their lovingly tended plants are the children they never had. Gordon Rowley has put his garden even before marriage, never mind children, and at 77 lives happily alone with an extraordinary collection of cacti. Passion of a quieter kind is expressed by three men with combined ages of 200 who look after a bowling green in Reading, brushing, spiking and cutting it to a velvety perfection. In a diverting film on a very British pastime we also meet Keith Brewer, a sweet pea grower hoping to win the annual challenge cup that will make him number one in the country.

Frasier
Channel 4, 10.00pm

Once the commercials have been extracted the average length of a Frasier episode is not much more than 20 minutes but such is the deftness of the plotting that it never seems too little. The narrative spark tonight is Frasier's conviction that somebody *is* putting a curse on his high school reunions. Why is it that they always seem to coincide with a crisis in his life? Five years ago his wife divorced him, five years before that he had been left at the altar and now, with the latest reunion looming, he has been sacked from the radio station and has no job. While his contemporaries have set up their own businesses or discovered a cure for cancer, he is unattached, unemployed and living with his father. An accident-prone job interview is only one of many comic delights in a beautifully crafted script.


Bananarama are the subjects of *Young Guns Go for It* (BBC2, 11.20pm)

Young Guns Go For It
BBC2, 11.15pm

The success of the Spice Girls has tended to eclipse the memory of previous British girl bands but in their day Bananarama were very big indeed. Bigger even than the Supremes, it claims here. But the signifiance of Sara Dallin, Keren Woodward and Siobhan Fahey lay not so much in their music but their determination to control their careers. Even gurus of the pop industry such as Malcolm McLaren found their advice spurned. "We didn't want to be someone else's product," Fahey recalls, and nor were they. Bananarama emerged in the aftermath of punk and while it took a man, the Sex Pistols drummer Paul Cook, to get them started, once launched they were their own women. In the nature of pop groups they eventually fell prey to internal tensions but only after 12 hit singles and a raft of successful albums. **Peter Waymark**

RADIO CHOICE

Frankenstein
Radio 2, 9.15pm

Although something closely resembling the real *Frankenstein* story eventually made it to the cinema screen, I suspect most people are more familiar with the story as a symbol and in its rather overblown visual incarnations. This has tended to obscure the underlying theme of Mary Shelley's book: what are the limits of scientific knowledge and *is* a scientific development desirable just because it is possible? Shelley's book, read here in six parts by Sir Derek Jacobi, explores these themes as well as telling a chilling story. The serialisation is a reminder that Shelley knew how to construct a gripping narrative, all the more remarkable given that she started writing the novel when she was just 18 years old.

Visions: The Music of Olivier Messiaen
Radio 3, 7.30pm

Two consecutive programmes tonight come live from Westminster Cathedral and feature the work of Olivier Messiaen. One of several merits attached to hearing nearly four hours' worth of the French composer's work is that it demonstrates the sheer longevity and variety of his music, with some of tonight's compositions written half a century apart. The first concert, part of *Performance on 3*, features the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew (soon to be Sir Andrew) Davis and includes *Poèmes pour Mi* and *Eclairs sur L'au-D'ela*, both with love as the theme: human love in the former, religious in the latter. At 10pm, there is a performance by the organist Naji Hakim of *La Nativité du Seigneur (The Birth of Christ)*. **Peter Barnard**

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball **9.00** Simon Mayo **12.00pm** Kevin Greening **2.00** Mark Radcliffe **4.00** Chris Moyles **6.00** Pete Tong's Essential Selection **9.00** Judge Jules **11.00** Westwood: Radio 1 Rap Show **2.00am** Fabio and Grooverider **4.00** Emma B

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy **7.30** Wake Up to Wogan **9.30** Ken Bruce **12.00pm** Jimmy Young **2.00** Ed Stewart **5.05** Des Lynam **7.00** A Very British Story (2/4) **7.30** Friday Night is Music Night. From Bridgewater Hall, Manchester **9.15** Frankenstein. Mary Shelley's classic horror tale. See Choice (1/6) **9.30** Listen to the Band **10.00** David Jacobs **10.30** Sheridan Morley **12.00am** Lynn Parsons **4.00** Lata Sharma

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports **6.00** Breakfast with Nick Robinson and Victoria Derbyshire **9.00** Nicky Campbell **12.00pm** The Midday News with Annie Webster **1.00** Ruscoe and Co **4.00** Drive with Peter Allen and Jane Garvey **7.00** News Extra **7.30** Alan Green's Sportsnight. Alan Green and studio guests debate the week's sporting action **10.00** Late Night Live with Brian Hayes **1.00am** Up All Night

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans **9.30** Bobby Hain **1.00pm** Nick Abbot **4.00** Harriet Scott **7.00** Wheels of Steel **11.00** Janey Lee Grace **2.00am** Steve Power

TALK RADIO

6.00am David Banks and Nick Ferrari **9.00** Scott Chisholm **1.00pm** Anna Raeburn **3.00** OK! to Talk **5.00** The Sports Zone **8.00** Jackie Mason: Live from New York **10.00** Dave Barrett's Phone-in with the Midnight Psychic **1.00am** Mike Dickin

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today **6.00** The World Today **7.00** News **7.15** Outlook **7.55** My Century **8.00** News **8.05** Westway **8.20** Off the Shelf: Silas Marner **8.35** Science in Action **9.00** News **9.05** Speaking of English **9.20** John Peel **9.50** Sports Round-Up **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** Britain Today **10.45** On Your Behalf **11.00** Newsdesk **11.30** Focus on Faith **12.00pm** News **12.05** Outlook **12.45** Sports Round-Up **1.00** Newshour **2.00** News **2.05** Science in Action **2.30** Music Review **3.00** News **3.05** Football Extra **3.15** Performance **3.30** The Vintage Chart Show **4.00** News **4.15** Insight **4.30** Multitrack Alternative **5.00** Europe Today **5.30** World Business Report **5.45** Sports Round-Up **6.00** News **6.15** Britain Today **6.30** Focus on Faith **7.00** News **7.05** Science in Action **7.30** On Your Behalf **7.45** Off the Shelf: Silas Marner **8.00** Newshour **9.00** News **9.05** World Business Report **9.20** Britain Today **9.30** Music Review **10.00** News **10.15** Sports Round-Up **10.30** Multitrack Alternative **11.00** News **11.05** Outlook **11.45** Insight **12.00am** The World Today **12.30** Science in Action **12.55** My Century **1.00** The World Today **1.30** Meridian (Books) **2.00** The World Today **2.30** People and Politics **3.00** The World Today **3.20** Sports Round-Up **3.30** World Business Report **3.45** Insight **4.00** The World Today **4.30** Weekend

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easier Breakfast. Music to get the day off to a fine start **8.00** Henry Kelly. The Hall of Fame Hour. Plus, favourite pieces voted for in the Classic FM Top 300 **12.00pm** Lunchtime Requests: Jane Jones plays listeners' favourite music **2.00** Concerto. Gliere (Harp Concerto) **3.00** Jamie Crick. Includes Afternoon Romance, Continuous Classics, plus sport updates and travel news **6.30** Newsnight. Top stories and interviews with guests from the arts world **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven. John Brunning introduces classic sounds **9.00** Evening Concert. Bach (A Musical Offering); Vivaldi (Gloria in D major); Beethoven (Piano Concerto No 4 in G) **11.00** Mann at Night. Music and conversation for the early hours with Alan Mann **2.00am** Concerto. Gliere (Harp Concerto) (r) **3.00** Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Petroc Trelawny. Bach (Double Violin Concerto in D minor, BWV1043); Mendelssohn (Overture for Wind Instruments); Kreisler (Praeludium and Allegro)
9.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Haydn (Piano Trio in E flat, H XV 29); Dowland (M. John Langton's Pavan); Ibert (Escales)
10.30 Artist of the Week: Emanuel Ax
11.00 Sound Stories: Feuds Corner Richard Baker recalls the rivalry between the divas Maria Callas and Renata Tebaldi
12.00pm Composer of the Week: Rimsky-Korsakov
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Thomas Trotter, organ, Paul Watkins, cello. Bach (Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV542, Great); Saint-Saens (Danse Macabre, arr Lemare; Priere); Dupre (Cello Sonata in A minor, Op 60); Saint-Saens (The Swan, Carnival of the Animals)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davis, Felicity Lott, soprano, Viktoria Mullova, violin. Ravel (Valses Nobles et Sentimentales); Strauss (Four Last Songs); Debussy (Prelude a l'Apres-Midi d'un Faune); Bartok (Violin Concerto No 2)
4.00 Music Restored (r)
4.45 Music Machine with Tommy Pearson
5.00 In Tune with Sean Rafferty. Music tonight includes Grieg (Wedding Day at Troldhaugen); Bach (Violin Concerto in E, BWV1042)
7.30 Visions: The Music of Olivier Messiaen Live from Westminster Cathedral. BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davis, Rosemary Hardy, soprano. See Choice **8.00** Messiaen and Religion **8.15** Concert, part two
9.35 Postscript: The Red Flag and the Red Mask
10.00 Visions: the Music of Olivier Messiaen Live from Westminster Cathedral, London. Naji Hakim, organ. See Choice
11.10 Offenbach Ballet music from *Orpheus in the Underworld* performed by the Gulbenkian Orchestra under Michel Swierczewski
11.30 Jazz Century (2/52) (r)
12.00am Composer of the Week: Poulenc (r)
1.00 Through the Night with Donald Macleod. **1.00** Rameau (Zais). Mieke van der Sluis, Jane Marsh and Marjanne Kweksilber, sopranos, John Elwes, tenor, Max van Egmond and David Thomas, basses, Concerto vocale, La Petite Bande under Philippe Herreweghe and Sigiswald Kuijken **3.50** Howells (Psalm Preludes, Set 2 No 1) **4.05** Tchaikovsky (Serenade in C) **5.20** Pederson (Mass for Five Voices)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast
5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day
5.47 Farming Today Rural issues, with Charlotte Smith
6.00 Today introduced by John Humphries and Winifred Robinson
8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Round-up of political news
9.00 Desert Island Discs The war correspondent Clare Hollingworth talks to Sue Lawley (r)
9.45 (FM) Serial: The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle Michael Williams reads the concluding part of Martin Booth's biography (r)
9.45 (LW) An Act of Worship
10.00 Woman's Hour Presented by Jenni Murray
11.00 Sentimental Journey Arthur Smith's former professor Malcolm Bradbury visits the University of Indiana (r)
11.30 The Oldest Member Rodney Fails to Qualify, by P.G. Wodehouse. Maurice Denham stars as the golf club veteran (3/6)
12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast
12.00pm (FM) News 12.04 You and Yours Consumer issues and public service reports
1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke
1.30 Screen Test Brian Sibley presents the final of the film quiz, from the Museum of the Moving Image in London
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Afternoon Play: The Girl from Clare by Patricia M. Cobey. A student becomes pregnant, filling her boyfriend with dismay — until the baby is born. Starring Cathy Belton and Luke Griffin (r)
3.00 Logged On Quentin Cooper suggests what kind of after-sales service customers should expect when buying a computer (2/5)
3.30 Tales from the Village Joel Kibazo learns how the Luo people view the birth of a disabled child as a blessing (5/5) (r)
3.45 This Sceptred Isle with Anna Massey (r)
4.00 Open Book Humphrey Carpenter looks into literature which examines the world from a child's point of view (r)
4.30 The Message Alex Brodie and his guests discuss current media trends
5.00 PM with Clare English
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 The Ghost of Number Ten A scientist develops pig organs transferable to humans and wins national approval (2/6)
7.00 The Archers
7.15 Front Row Mark Lawson reviews Patricia Cornwell's new forensic thriller
7.45 Lady Susan by Jane Austen, starring Maggie Steed. Broadcast as part of *Woman's Hour* (r)
8.00 Any Questions? Guests joining Jonathan Dimbleby at Lancaster University include Lord Tebbit; Martin Bell, MP; Ian McCartney, Trade and Industry Minister; and Lady Eames, president of the Mothers' Union
8.45 Letter from America by Alistair Cooke
9.00 The Friday Play: Life's a Sport by Mick Martin. A top rugby player discovers he has HIV. With Andy Cryer and Ralph Ineson
10.00 The World Tonight with Robin Lustig
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Nana by Emile Zola (10/15)
11.00 Late Night on 4: Late Tackle Sporting conversation, with Eleanor Oldroyd
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament
11.30 (FM) Sporting Philanthropists Liam Fogarty meets the saviour of the *SS Great Britain*, Sir Jack Hayward, to discuss his passion for Wolverhampton Wanderers (3/3)
12.00am News
12.30 The Late Book: Last Resort Part five, by Alison Lurie. Read by Kate Harper
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. **RADIO 2.** FM 88.0-90.2. **RADIO 3.** FM 90.2-92.4. **RADIO 4.** FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. **RADIO 5 LIVE.** MW 693, 909. **WORLD SERVICE.** MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). **CLASSIC FM.** FM 100-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. **TALK RADIO.** MW 1053, 1089.

Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.

Obesity treatment that I couldn't stomach

There is a ghastly note of jolly, all-pals-having-fun-together optimism about the BBC's Fighting Fat, *Fighting Fit* campaign. Never mind. BBC2's *Horizon* has provided an antidote in a trilogy of investigations of obesity and other eating disorders, gloomy enough to wipe the grin off the face of the most inane Dale Winton fan.

Last night Fixing Fat provided a series of cautionary tales worthy of the most ferocious Victorian governess. "Wolfing victuals by the plate, / Greedy Shirley piled on weight. / Desp'rate to escape this rut, / She let the surgeon shorten her gut. / Foolish girl! She soon knew fear. / When she almost died of diarrhoea!" That sort of thing.

Desperate people have always been vulnerable to charlatans and the overenthusiastic promoters of *under-researched treatments*. The programme provided a history of crushed hopes and bitter disillusionment. Shirley had an intestinal bypass, which left her with a few inches of operative digestive tract. She lost weight while eating like a horse. But the stuff was passing straight through. She *spent hours in the loo* and began to develop the appalling side-effects, which almost killed her.

Xenical was another miracle cure which prevents the body absorbing a third of the fat you eat, converting it into a reddish oil, which squirts out at unexpected moments. A combination of wonder drugs nicknamed "Phen-Fen" swept America in 1996. This targeted the hypothalamus, the part of the brain that controls appetite. But it can also interfere with your breathing, badly enough to cause fatal degeneration of your vital organs, as Carla Sickle discovered.

Is there light at the end of the tunnel? The surgeon Alberic Fiennes (Ralph's brother) reversed Shirley's disastrous operation and has installed an adjustable silicone ring round her stomach, which seems to be working well. Art Campfield is developing a drug to control the hypothalamus safely, while nutritionists work on fat substitutes and miracle supplements. Encouraging, but don't ask me to be the guinea-pig.

Television's passion for docusoaps is so intense at the moment that there is no corner of society dull enough to escape the prying lens. Yet this overused, predictable genre can still surprise us. Last night brought two new series, each a flash photo of one extreme of the spectrum of child-rearing.

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

Norland College, we were assured, is the world's most prestigious college for training *nannies*. *Norland Nannies* (Channel 4) took us behind the scenes. The programme stressed the traditional skills and values instilled in the wholesome young gels, each clad in a vast neo-Edwardian uniform. They even shot the title footage of Leah Amethyst O'Brien pushing a huge old-fashioned pram in sepia.

Leah Amethyst is Australian, despite looking like Mary Poppins, and was not *pursued* by a chimney-sweep with a strangulated Cockney accent. The young ladies learn knitting, sewing and are subjected to practice Burns nights by Colonel Mike Dorward, the mildly embarrassing bursar.

Class distinctions are preserved in that the wealthier students pay fees of £12,000 per annum (similar to those at Eton), while the not so wealthy can become "Sharman" students who work as skivvies for a year and then get the course half-price. The irony is that all this fuss about tradition is a blind. Norland College is based on child-centred principles, where control is achieved through attention and commitment rather than stern discipline. It would be a tribute to Sixties progressivism if it had not been founded 107 years ago.

It looks like a wonderful place, but at £48 per night per child in the children's hotel used for training, so it should be. So far we have *learnt nothing of the students'* backgrounds, and have had little insight of the parents who usually make the most outrageous viewing on series of this type. Only trainee *Shanta Gilliot* struck a discordant note, allowing her outrage to show because little Sammi's parents had taken their Caribbean holiday during her birthday, for the second time in her tiny life.

But then if you have enough money you can be as emotionally negligent as you like, while buying your child the best possible substitute parenting.

Channel 5 certainly likes to stretch the envelope in its quest for mortar to plug the gaps between the bought-in Hollywood B-movies. *Family Confidential*, the first of a new series about people in extraordinary circumstances, was deeply, deeply depressing.

When kind-hearted Liz took in homeless Helen (17), she did not realise she would get pregnant by her 13-year-old son, Mike. "I didn't take no precautions 'cause I didn't think me and Michael would last." Helen explained with faultless logic. "It's just the risk you take, so I didn't bother." There was no discussion as to whether a termination was considered. "I've finally found the man I love," explained Helen.

Helen's friends were more discriminating. "Come back when you've got pubes," one had told a young suitor.

Helen's mother Trafhina had abandoned her when she was ten. She lived nearby now, mutton dressed as Spam, too idle and selfish to help, yet baffled by Helen's resentment. "I was a good mother to Helen," she lied.

Liz doesn't see much of a future. "Most marriages end in divorce anyway," Mike said he'd probably leave if Helen hadn't agreed to marry him by the time he was 18. Not to worry. "I'll still be there for Jamie when she needs clothes and that." *There was no need for* commentary nor interpretation: they spoke for themselves.

BBC1

5.40am Faces of Islam (r) (T) (3753592)
6.00 Business Breakfast (74950)
7.00 Breakfast News (T) (27979)
9.00 Kilroy (T) (8643009)
9.45 The Vanessa Show (T) (5016979)
10.55 News; Weather (T) (7975573)
11.00 Real Rooms (7985950)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (7962009)
11.55 News; Weather (T) (1188405)
12.00pm Call My Bluff (98318)
12.30 Battersea Dogs' Home (23592)
1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (97738)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (86676009)
1.40 Neighbours (T) (65356825)
2.05 Ironside A policewoman sets out to clear her father's name (r) (7649399)
2.55 Going for a Song (8534554)
3.20 The Weather Show (T) (2965405)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (8522234) **3.45** Spider (9050405) **3.50** Smart on the Road (8476467) **4.05** Rugrats (9539467) **4.30** L & K Friday (1692370) **4.55** Newsround Extra (1093115) **5.10** Blue Peter (6578825)
5.35 Neighbours (r) (T) (827221)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (641)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (221)
7.00 Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook Neil Sedaka and Alice Beer take part in the cookery challenge (T) (9028)
7.30 Top of the Pops The week's chart-toppers, featuring the UK's number one single (T) (405)
8.00 Vets in Practice Trude puts her new romance on the back-burner in an attempt to save a litter of kittens suffering from loss of blood caused by flea bites (4/10) (T) (8776)
8.30 A Question of Sport Quiz, presented by Sue Barker (T) (7283)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (6399)



The madcap comedian Lee Evans joins Michael Parkinson (9.30pm)

9.30 Parkinson Celebrity interviews with the hyperactive funnyman Lee Evans, and the actors Robert Lindsay and Stephen Fry (T) (510689)
10.25 Blind Side (1993) Premiere. Happy couple Ron Silver and Rebecca De Mornay accidentally run over a policeman and flee the scene, little realising a psychopath witnessed the incident. Thriller, with Rutger Hauer. Directed by Geoff Murphy (T) (1698115)
11.55 The Stand-Up Show Featuring John Fothergill (519793)
12.25am The Big End Simon Mayo discovers more bizarre TV (r) (T) (5870413)
12.55 The Lords of Discipline (1982) Students at a military academy carry out a series of racist attacks against the first black cadet. Powerful 1960s-set drama, starring David Keith. Directed by Franc Roddam (T) (583142)
2.30 Weather (4716429)
2.35 BBC News 24 (21344887)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Hairy Jeremy (6592347) **7.05** Teletubbies (2901844) **7.30** Yogi's Treasure Hunt (3880776) **7.55** Short Change (2280738) **8.13** Rewind (8684405) **8.15** Taz-Mania (5610689) **8.40** Polka Dot Shorts (8113979) **8.50** Johnson and Friends (8102863) **9.00** Daytime On Two: Storytime (7039134) **9.10** See You, See Me (6455399) **9.30** Numbertime (8211931) **9.45** Come Outside (8216486) **10.00** Children's BBC: Teletubbies (81689) **10.30** Daytime On Two: Megamaths (3167554) **10.50** Look and Read (3187318) **11.10** Landmarks (1433318) **11.30** English File (8134)
12.00 [CHOICE] **Scene: Junk** Controversial dramatisation of the novel by Melvin Burgess (89680)
12.30pm Working Lunch (21134) **1.00** Johnson and Friends (73647554)
1.10 The Arts and Crafts Hour (2462196)
2.10 Indoor Bowls: World Championship Dougie Donnelly introduces early first-round action (32913842)
6.00 The Simpsons (r) (T) (855370)
6.20 The Simpsons (r) (T) (866486)
6.45 Robot Wars with Craig Charles and Philippa Forrester (T) (804009)
7.15 Electric Circus (T) (786196)
7.30 Country House Lord Tavistock is shocked to learn a skeleton has been uncovered on the estate (T) (937)
8.00 Gardening from Scratch Creating a wildlife pond (3/6) (r) (T) (6318)
8.30 [CHOICE] **Garden Stories** A programme about obsessive horticulturists (T) (5825)
9.00 Gimme Gimme Gimme Tom thinks his prayers have been answered when he lands an audition to play a hooligan in a crime reconstruction. Kathy Burke and James Dreyfus star (T) (7641)
9.30 Bang Bang It's Reeves and Mortimer The hunt is on for America's most incredible vegetable (3/6) (T) (93270)



Classic 1980s comedy with Ade Edmondson as Vivian (10pm)

10.00 The Young Ones The squalid students feel bored (r) (T) (97689)
10.30 Newsnight With Kirsty Wark (T) (997009)
11.15 Suspended in Time (T) (319955)
11.20 [CHOICE] **Young Guns Go for It!** A profile of the 1980s girl-group Bananarama (T) (277912)
11.50 The Talent New series focussing on short innovative films (T) (632080)
12.40am In the Gloaming (TVM 1997) An Aids victim returns to his estranged family and tries to break down their preconceptions about the disease. Starring Glenn Close and Robert Sean Leonard. Directed by Christopher Reeve (8047516)
1.40 The Seven Ages of Music Celebration of South African music (6383535)
2.35 Weather (4633142) **2.40** Close
3.00 BBC Learning Zone: GCSE Bitesize Revision: French 1 (76852) **5.00** Close

HTV

5.30am ITN Morning News (87912)
6.00 GMTV (6768134)
9.25 Trisha (T) (3532405)
10.30 This Morning (T) (65228592)
12.20pm HTV News (T) (6942931)
12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (T) (18660)
12.59 HTV Crimestoppers (55214370)
1.00 WEST: Shortland Street Minnie plays Cupid (15134)
1.00 WALES: Wish You Were Here? Turkey, Aspen, the Dominican Republic and Ireland (r) (T) (15134)
1.30 Home and Away Justine attracts a secret admirer (T) (17931)
2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (T) (2873689)
2.45 Supermarket Sweep (T) (212979)
3.15 ITN News Headlines (T) (2953660)
3.20 HTV News (T) (2950573)
3.25 CITV: Mopatop's Shop (2940196) **3.35** Timbuctoo (9056689) **3.40** Animal Stories (9037554) **3.50** Adam's Family Tree (8412221) **4.20** Gladiators: Train 2 Win (9529080) **4.50** Top Ten of Everything (9139844)
5.10 A Country Practice Kate practises her judo moves on Harry (3959842)
5.40 ITN Early Evening News; Weather (T) (425912)
6.00 Home and Away (r) (T) (767641)
6.25 WALES: Wales Tonight (T) (611009)
6.25 WEST: HTV Weather (482955)
6.30 WEST: The West Tonight (T) (689)
7.00 Bruce's Price Is Right (T) (4196)
7.30 Coronation Street Rita gets a surprise visit (T) (573)
8.00 Airline A traffic jam causes chaos (3844)
8.30 Neighbours from Hell Eyewitness testimony and footage provide accounts of neighbourly disputes (T) (2979)
9.00 Tilly Trotter Part two of the Catherine Cookson drama, starring Carli Norris, Simon Shepherd and Elizabeth Kelly (2/4) (T) (9979)
10.00 News at Ten; Weather (T) (84115)
10.30 HTV News and Weather (T) (811370)

The newsreader Trevor McDonald joins Ian Wright (10.40pm)

10.40 Friday Night's All Wright With guests Trevor McDonald, Paul Whitehouse and Charlie Higson (908115)
11.30 Millennium Frank Black investigates the mysterious suicides of identical twin girls born seven years apart (41757)
12.30am Pirate TV Fab and Tony prepare for a freefall jump (23806)
1.00 When Eight Bells Toll (1971) A Navy intelligence agent tackles modern-day pirates looting bullion ships off the British coast. Thriller, starring Anthony Hopkins and Robert Morley. Directed by Etienne Perier (493852)
2.45 The Haunted Fishtank (r) (28413)
3.15 Baywatch Caroline blames herself for the accidental drowning of a drunken teenager (r) (4636806)
4.00 Trisha Shown earlier (r) (T) (58061)
5.00 Coronation Street (r) (T) (15516)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except: **12.20pm-12.30 Central News;** Weather (T) (6942931) **1.00 Wish You Were Here?** (r) (T) (15134) **1.30 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (9971486) **2.15-2.45 Home and Away** (T) (273080) **3.20-3.25 Central News** (T) (2950573) **5.10-5.40 Shortland Street** (3959842) **6.25-7.00 Central News;** Weather (T) (611009) **10.30-10.40 Central News;** Weather (T) (811370) **11.30 Tales from the Crypt** (74399) **12.00am Short Story Cinema** (5594852) **12.35 FILM: The Tower** (980142) **2.15 Box Office America** (9939245) **2.40 SeaQuest DSV** (r) (6805245) **3.30 The Haunted Fishtank** (r) (92041) **4.00 Central Jobfinder '99** (4883087) **5.20-5.30 Asian Eye** (4113697)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.27 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (9326283) **12.27-12.30 Illuminations** (6950950) **1.00 Westcountry Update** (T) (15134) **1.30 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (9971486) **2.15-2.45 Home and Away** (T) (273080) **3.20-3.25 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (2950573) **5.08 Birthday People** (8557080) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (3959842) **6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live** (T) (33979) **10.30-10.40 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (811370) **11.30 Renegade** (168298) **12.25am-12.30 Jody Horowitz Reports** (r) (5803239)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.30 Meridian News;** Weather (9326283) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (3959842) **6.00-7.00 Meridian Tonight** (T) (33979) **10.30-10.40 Meridian News;** Weather (T) (811370) **11.30-12.30 Bob Monkhouse on Campus** (T) (41757) **5.00am-5.30 Freescreen** (T) (15516)

ANGLIA

As HTV West except: **12.19pm Anglia Air Watch** (6938738) **12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather** (6942931) **1.00-1.35 Save Your Bacon** (1/6) (r) (1296554) **5.10-5.40 Shortland Street** (3959842) **6.23 Anglia Weather** (T) (389394) **6.25-7.00 Anglia News** (T) (611009) **10.29 Anglia Air Watch** (956134) **10.30-10.40 Anglia News and Weather** (T) (811370) **11.30-12.30 Bob Monkhouse On Campus** (T) (41757)

S4C

Starts. **5.55am Sesame Street** (r) (45996080) **7.00 The Big Breakfast** (47966134) **9.00 Ysgolion:** Off Limits (98282931) **9.25 Schools at Work** (41987950) **9.45 Stop, Look, Listen** (89599689) **10.00 The Complete Cosmos** (71726757) **10.10 TVM** (35756979) **10.25 Iaith ar Daith** (35735486) **10.45 Enter the Maths Zone** (39069399) **11.00 The Technology Programme** (18006844) **11.15 Pa Newydd?** (18096467) **11.30 Powerhouse** (T) (24822689) **12.00pm Bewitched** (T) (16547844) **12.30 Sesame Street** (38549318) **1.00 Planed Plant;** Tecwyn y Tractor (54303592) **1.15 Mymryn bach** (T) (54308047) **1.30 Unsigned** (69810221) **1.45 FILM: The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery** (T) (34221660) **3.30 Hampton Court Palace** (T) (56229825) **4.00 Fifteen-to-One** (T) (56231660) **4.30 Dishes** (T) (56237844) **5.00 Planed Plant** (20234414) **5.30 Countdown** (T) (56228196) **6.00 Newyddion 6** (T) (69107486) **6.10 Heno** (T) (95809283) **7.00 Pobol y Cwm** (T) (44634270) **7.30 Newyddion** (T) (56238573) **8.00 Cefn Gwlad** (T) (24834478) **8.30 Y Clwb Rygbi** (T) (49684775) **9.00 Pawb a'i Farn** (13113738) **10.00 Brookside** (T) (54096486) **10.35 Frasier** (T) (67928689) **11.05 Eurotrash** (T) (24563711) **11.35 TFI Friday** (49805009) **12.40am 4 Later;** The Divine David Presents (71137429) **1.15 Exploitica: Bad Ass Babes** (23362500) **1.45 FILM: Teenage Gang Debs** (76591719) **3.15 FILM: Eye Witness** (92482158) **4.40 Diwedd**

CHANNEL 4

5.45am Pink Panther (7822467)
5.50 Animal Alphabet (7812080)
5.55 Sesame Street (r) (4758592)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (10689)
9.00 Schools: Off Limits (6445757) **9.25** Schools at Work (7277399) **9.30** Eureka (8213399) **9.45** Stop, Look, Listen (8201554) **10.00** The Complete Cosmos (4749283) **10.10** TVM (9414844) **10.25** Ulster Unearthed (9433979) **10.45** Enter the Maths Zone (5898221) **11.00** The Technology Programme (6445467) **11.15** Stage One (6468318)
11.30 Powerhouse (T) (3202)
12.00pm Sesame Street (T) (81026)
12.30 Bewitched (T) (16202)
1.00 Pet Rescue (r) (T) (13776)
1.30 Roots to Success (T) (65383979)
1.55 The Virgin Queen (1955) Historical epic chronicling the relationship between Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh. Bette Davis and Richard Todd star. Directed by Henry Koster (T) (61598660)
3.30 Hampton Court Palace (T) (467)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (202)
4.30 Countdown (T) (1685080)
4.55 Ricki Lake (T) (4703738)
5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (738)
6.00 TFI Friday Chris Evans's guests include the actress Jane Horrocks (24221)
7.00 Channel 4 News; Weather (T) (305221)
7.50 Gilbert and Sullivan: The Very Models The duo's 25-year relationship with D'Oyly Carte (T) (941221)
8.00 The Lost Gardens of Heligan The team set to work transforming the Sundial Garden (2/6) (r) (T) (1486)



Luke (Jason Kavanah) and Jason (Vincent Price) come to blows (8.30pm)

8.30 Brookside Gemma blames Mick for her unhappiness and there's a scuffle between Jason and Luke (T) (3221)
9.00 Friends The gang pay their last respects at the funeral of Ross and Monica's grandmother (r) (T) (9009)
9.30 Streetmate Davina McCall visits Glasgow and Leeds (T) (93298)
10.00 [CHOICE] **Frasier** The high school reunion approaches (T) (82757)
10.30 Eurotrash (T) (884196)
11.05 King of the Hill Bobby falls in love with a classmate (T) (288028)
11.35 TFI Friday Shown earlier (r) (236405)
12.40am 4 Later Introduction; The Divine David Presents (3158326)
1.15 Exploitica: Bad Ass Babes (T) (97072)
1.45 Teenage Gang Debs (1966) A leather-clad female gangster starts a turf war with a rival gang in 1950s Brooklyn. Directed by Sande Johnsen (T) (590245)
3.15 Eye Witness (1956) A murderous gang leader sets out to silence the only witness to his latest crime. With Donald Sinden, Muriel Pavlow and Michael Craig. Directed by Muriel Box (4821626)
4.40 Dweebs (r) (48944061)
5.05 Pearl Pearl cheats on a test (1620968)

CHANNEL 5

6.00am 5 News and Sport Headlines (7871689)
7.00 WideWorld Part six. How beaches are affected by the weather (r) (T) (9969592)
7.30 Milkshake! (2259775)
7.35 Winzie's House (r) (9690405)
8.00 Havakazoo (r) (1030196)
8.30 Dappledown Farm (r) (1039467)
9.00 Mixing It (r) (T) (2643979)
9.25 Russell Grant's Postcards (4665134)
9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (6482641)
10.20 Sunset Beach Virginia takes a pregnancy test (T) (2097689)
11.10 Leeza (2977115)
12.00pm 5 News at Noon (T) (1033283)
12.30 Family Affairs Jamie takes a blood test (r) (T); 5 News Update (9809912)
1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Sheila arrives home from hospital (T) (9968863)
1.30 The Roseanne Show Patti LaBelle guests on the talk show (r) (9808283)
2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (6229283)
2.30 Good Afternoon (4428047)
3.30 Dalva (TVM 1996) Farrah Fawcett stars as a woman determined to discover the truth about her past and find the baby she was forced to give up as a 15-year-old. Drama, with Powers Boothe. Directed by Ken Cameron (9502738)
5.20 Sunset Beach Shown earlier (r) (T); 5 News Update (6051467)
6.00 100 Per Cent Quiz (5180592)
6.30 Family Affairs Dave and Holly's relationship heats up (T) (5171844)
7.00 5 News; Weather (T) (6230399)
7.30 Champions of the Wild The world's smallest marine mammal, the sea otter (T); 5 News Update (5177028)
8.00 Was It Good for You? Ailsa Greenhalgh invites a newlywed couple and two action-loving friends to comment on their holidays in the Dominican Republic (2/14) (6249047)
8.30 Holiday Park The *EastEnders* star Patsy Palmer and Carol Harrison visit the park for a holiday (2/6) (6228554)
9.00 Shadow of Obsession (1994) Psychological thriller about a private eye whose attempts to protect a college professor are thrown into disarray by the murder of the stalker supposedly terrorising her. Jack Scalia, Veronica Hamel and Page Moseley star. Directed by Kevin Connor (T) (52104080)
10.40 The People vs Jerry Sadowitz Out-takes from the acerbic comedian's show. Last in series (3386399)
11.10 Eva (1977) Erotic drama charting an obsessive relationship. Directed by Cedric Sundstrom (9498202)
1.00am And the Band Played On (1993) True-life drama chronicling the efforts by scientists to isolate and identify HIV in the early 1980s. The all-star cast includes Matthew Modine, Ian McKellen and Richard Gere. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode (7022177)
3.30 Stormy (1935) Vintage western about a wandering cowboy who befriends a rancher and helps him to save a herd of wild horses. Directed by Louis Friedlander (87260239)
4.35 The Road Emmylou Harris (10256055)
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (3996264)
5.30 100 Per Cent (r) (2259559)

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SKY ONE

7.00am Count Duckula (47757) **7.30** Chris Evans (40486) **8.30** Hollywood Squares (23202) **9.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (48689) **10.00** Oprah Winfrey (55776) **11.00** Guilty! (35912) **12.00pm** Jenny Jones (44009) **1.00** Mad About You (46028) **1.30** Jeopardy (57573) **2.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (80298) **3.00** Jenny Jones (66757) **4.00** Guilty! (78592) **5.00** Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (7689) **6.00** Married — With Children (4221) **6.30** Friends (5573) **7.00** Simpsons (8318) **7.30** Simpsons (1757) **8.00** Beat the Crusher (96486) **9.00** World's Most Dangerous Animals III (57450) **10.00** Cops (31047) **10.30** Cops (17467) **11.00** Friends (79221) **11.30** Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (18028) **12.30am** Highlander (11608) **1.30** Long Play (5939264)

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SKY BOX OFFICE 3 (Transponder 59)
Buddy (1997)
Starship Troopers (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 4 (Transponder 58)
One Night Stand (1997)

FILMFOUR

6.00pm Short Attention Span Cinema (7215283) **8.00 The Waterdance (1992)** (7227028) **10.00 Stress (1994)** (7473554) **11.35 Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love (1996)** (4172134) **1.30am Simple Men (1992)** (3990500) **3.15 Carla's Song (1996)** (64373413) **6.00** Close

SKY PREMIER

6.00am Draw! (1984) (82970863) **7.45 Amy (1981)** (48431329) **9.30 Empire of the Sun (1987)** (257486) **12.00pm Project X (1987)** (819776) **1.45 Amy (1981)** (47340115) **3.30 Empire of the Sun (1987)** (471028) **6.00 Project X (1987)** (88467) **8.00 In Love and War (1997)** (83312) **10.00 The Fan (1996)** (58738) **12.00am Fargo (1996)** (250142) **1.40 The Passion of Darkly Noon (1995)** (638603) **3.20 Swimming with Sharks (1994)** (12343581)

SKY MOVIEMAX

5.05am Damnation Alley (1977) (83010202) **7.00 The Wind in the Willows (1996)** (38009) **9.00 Address Unknown (1996)** (80234) **11.00 Godzilla vs Megalon (1976)** (97486) **1.00pm Blue Rodeo (1996)** (80270) **3.00 Address Unknown (1996)** (12644) **5.00 The Wind in the Willows (1996)** (46979) **7.00** F-Review (3496) **7.30** UK Top 10 (6825) **8.00** Femmes Fatales: Jodie Foster (2134) **8.30** Movie Magic: Effects of the High Seas (1841) **9.00 The Jerky Boys (1995)** (60573) **10.30 Private Parts (1997)** (35927973) **12.20am Twin Town (1997)** (345284) **2.00 Grumpier Old Men (1995)** (331158) **3.40 Next Stop, Greenwich Village (1976)** (622968)

SKY CINEMA

4.00pm Five Card Stud (1968) (8952196) **6.00 The Pink Jungle (1968)** (7330009) **8.00 The Big Clock (1948)** (7335554) **10.00 Bullitt (1968)** (8241979) **11.55 The Drowning Pool (1975)** (7235009) **1.45am Damien: Omen II (1978)** (8895284) **3.35 About Mrs Leslie (1954)** (80634968)

TNT

9.00pm WCW Nitro (28028432) **11.35** WCW Thunder (25858080) **1.30am Shaft (1971)** (59422581) **3.15 The Slams (1973)** (78370603) **5.00** Close

SKY SPORTS 1

6.30am Futures in Sport **7.00** Sports Centre **7.15** World Wrestling Federation: Superstars **8.15** Sports Centre **8.30** Racing News **9.00** Aerobics Oz Style **9.30** You're On Sky Sports! **10.00** Football League Review **11.00** Futbol Mundial **11.30** Live European PGA Golf: Alfred Dunhill Championship **2.30pm** What a Weekend **3.00** The Rugby Club **4.00** Trans World Sport **5.00** Futbol Mundial **5.30** What a Weekend **6.00** Sports Centre **7.00** European Golf: Alfred Dunhill Championship **10.00** Sports Centre **11.00** Hold the Back Page **12.00am** Sports Centre **1.00** World Wrestling Federation: Raw **3.00** Hold the Back Page **4.00** Sports Centre **5.00** H2O **5.30** Moto-Plus

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Aerobics Oz Style **7.30** Live International Cricket **11.00** Live International Cricket **3.30pm** International Cricket **6.00** Wild Spirits **6.30** Moto-Plus **7.00** Live Friday Night Football **10.00** World Sport Special **10.30** Live US Golf: Sony Open **3.00am** Friday Night Football

SKY SPORTS 3

11.30am Futures in Sport **12.00pm** Trans World Sport **1.00** Fishing: Tight Lines **2.00** Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook **3.30** US Golf: Sony Open **5.30** World Sport Special **6.00** International Cricket **10.00** World Wrestling Federation: Raw **12.00am** Close

EUROSPORT

7.30am Rally **8.00** Snowboarding **9.00** Live Women's Biathlon **10.30** Rally **11.00** Live Women's Alpine Skiing **12.30pm** Luge **1.00** Racing Line **2.00** Tennis **3.30** Women's Biathlon **5.00** Snowboarding **6.00** Women's Alpine Skiing **7.00** Women's Tennis **9.30** Rally **10.00** Boxing **11.00** Extreme Sports **12.00am** Rally **12.30** Close

UK GOLD

7.00am Crossroads **7.30** Neighbours **7.55** EastEnders **8.30** The Bill **9.00** The Bill **9.30** The House of Eliott **10.30** Angels **11.00** Dallas **11.55** Neighbours **12.25pm** EastEnders **1.00** Juliet Bravo **2.00** Dallas **2.55** The Bill **3.25** The Bill **3.55** EastEnders **4.30** Angels **5.00** All Creatures Great and Small **6.00** Dynasty **7.00** May to December **7.40** It Ain't Half Hot, Mum **8.20** Yes, Minister **9.00** Men Behaving Badly **9.40** Knowing Me, Knowing You with Alan Partridge **10.20** Ruby Wax Meets Burt Reynolds **10.55** The Bill **11.25** The Bill **11.55** Doctor Who Omnibus **1.30am** Blake's Seven **2.30** Best of the Old Grey Whistle Test **3.00** Shopping with Screenshop

GRANADA PLUS

8.00am Within These Walls **7.00** On the Buses **7.30** Doctor in the House **8.00** That's My Boy **8.30** Second Thoughts **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** Emmerdale **10.00** thirtysomething **11.00** Hawaii Five O **12.00pm** Classic Coronation Street **12.30** Emmerdale **1.00** Nearest and Dearest **1.30** Agony **2.00** thirtysomething **3.00** The Love Boat **4.00** The Saint **5.00** Hawaii Five O **6.00** Emmerdale **6.30** Classic Coronation Street **7.00** Mission: Impossible **8.00** The Love Boat **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** The Brian Conley Show **10.00** Jokers Wild **10.30** Hogan's Heroes **11.00** Granada Men and Motors

Steve Coogan stars as the infamous Radio Norwich presenter Alan Partridge in *Knowing Me, Knowing You* (UK Gold, 9.40pm)

DISNEY CHANNEL

6.00am Bear in the Big Blue House **6.25** Classic Toons **6.35** Gummi Bears **7.00** Classic Toons **7.10** Aladdin **7.35** 101 Dalmatians **8.00** Goof Troop **8.25** Classic Toons **8.45** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **9.00** Adventures of Spot **9.05** Animal Shelf **9.15** Pocket Dragons **9.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **9.55** The Toothbrush Family **10.00** Bite Size **10.10** Tots TV **10.30** Big Garage **10.45** PB and J Otter **11.00** Sesame Street **12.00pm** Adventures of Spot **12.05** Animal Shelf **12.15** Pocket Dragons **12.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **12.55** The Toothbrush Family **1.00** Bite Size **1.15** Tots TV **1.30** Big Garage **1.45** PB and J Otter **2.00** Quack Pack **2.30** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **3.00** The Little Mermaid **3.30** Art Attack **4.00** 101 Dalmatians **4.30** Hercules, The TV Show **5.00** Recess **5.15** Pepper Ann **5.30** Smart Guy **6.00** Teen Angel **6.30** Boy Meets World **7.00** Honey, I Shrunk the Kids: The TV Show **7.50** Classic Toons **8.00 FILM: Doom Runners (1997)** **9.30** Home Improvement **10.00** Dinosaurs **10.30** The Wonder Years **11.00** Touched by an Angel **12.00am** Close

NICKELODEON

6.00am Muppet Babies **6.30** Rocko's Modern Life **7.00** CatDog **7.30** Rugrats **8.00** The Wild Thornberrys **8.30** Arthur **9.00** Children's BBC **10.00** Winzie's House **10.30** Babar **11.00** The Magic School Bus **11.30** PB Bear/Budgie the Little Helicopter/Animal Antics/Family Ness **12.00pm** Rugrats **12.30** Blue's Clues **1.00** Bananas in Pyjamas **1.30** Little Bear Stories **2.00** Clangers/King Rollo/Wombles/Bod **2.30** Children's BBC **3.00** Children's BBC **3.30** Pippi Longstocking **4.00** Hey Arnold! **4.30** Rugrats **5.00** Sister Sister **5.30** Kenan and Kel **6.00** Sabrina the Teenage Witch **6.30** Driven Crazy **7.00** Close

FOX KIDS NETWORK

6.00am Power Rangers Turbo **6.30** Power Rangers Turbo **7.00** Mortal Kombat **7.25** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.30** Donkey Kong Country **8.00** Goosebumps **8.25** Sam and Max **8.35** Spiderman **9.00** X-Men **9.25** Fantastic Four **9.50** The Incredible Hulk **10.15** Casper **10.30** Oggy and the Cockroaches **10.55** The Mouse and the Monster **11.05** Eek! Stravaganza **11.30** Life with Louie **11.55** Home to Rent **12.05pm** [illegible] **1.00** Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book **1.25** Ace Ventura **1.50** Spiderman **2.15** X-Men **2.40** Fantastic Four **3.05** The Incredible Hulk **3.30** Roy and Lisa's Big Ride **3.35** Mortal Kombat **4.00** Spiderman **4.25** Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book **4.50** Home to Rent **5.00** Goosebumps **5.25** Eerie, Indiana: The Other Dimension **5.50** Oggy and the Cockroaches **5.55** Donkey Kong Country **6.25** Sam and Max **6.50** Eek! **7.00** Close

TROUBLE

7.00am USA High **7.30** City Guys **8.00** Saved by the Bell: The New Class **8.30** Hang Time **9.00** Tempestt **10.00** Hollyoaks **10.30** Echo Point **11.00** Sweet Valley High **11.30** California Dreams **12.00pm** The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air **12.30** In the House **1.00** Tempestt **2.00** Hollyoaks **2.30** Echo Point **3.00** Ready Or Not **3.30** City Guys **4.00** The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air **4.30** In the House **5.00** Saved by the Bell: The New Class **5.30** Sweet Valley High **6.00** Hang Time **6.30** Movies, Games and Videos **7.00** USA High

BRAVO

8.00pm The A-Team **9.00** LAPD **9.30** Cops **10.00** Scary Sex **10.30** Erotic Series **11.00 FILM: Scissors (1991)** **1.00am** Sex Bytes **1.30** Scary Sex **2.00** Extreme Championship Wrestling **2.30** Cops **3.00 FILM: Double Agent 73 (1975)** **5.00** LAPD **5.30** Bushido **6.00** Close

PARAMOUNT COMEDY

7.00pm Clueless **7.30** Desmond's **8.00** Roseanne **8.30** News Radio **9.00** Cybill **9.30** Vic Reeves Big Night Out **10.00 FILM: Delirious (1991)** **12.00am** Late Night with David Letterman **1.00** Taxi **1.30** The Critic **2.00** Dr Katz **2.30** Soap **3.00** Wings **3.30** Nightstand **4.00** Close

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATELLITE: 8pm-MIDNIGHT ONLY

7.30am Bloomberg Information Television **8.00** Sightings **9.00** Battlestar Galactica **10.00** Quantum Leap **11.00** Dark Shadows **11.30** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **12.00pm** The Twilight Zone **12.30** The Twilight Zone **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Amazing Stories **2.30** Mysteries, Magic and Miracles **3.00** Battlestar Galactica **4.00** The Incredible Hulk **5.00** Sightings **6.00** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **6.30** New Alfred Hitchcock **7.00** Quantum Leap **8.00** Amazing Stories **8.00** Highlander: The Raven **8.30** The Hunger **10.00 FILM: Swamp Thing (1982)** **11.50** Sci-Focus **12.00am FILM: Appleseed (1991)** **1.20** Sci-Focus **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** The Guyver **2.30** 100 Years of Horror **3.00** The Twilight Zone **3.30** Dark Shadows **4.00** Close

HOME & LEISURE

6.00am Today's Gourmet **6.30** Graham Kerr **7.00** Craftwise **7.30** The Painted House **8.00** Wedding Story **8.30** A Baby Story **9.00** Simply Painting **9.30** Garden Rescue **10.00** Garden Doctors **10.30** Cookabout with Greg and Max **11.00** Two's Country: Get Stuck In **11.30** Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **12.00pm** Australia's Strangest Home Improvements **12.30** Doing It Up **1.00** Our House **1.30** Hometime **2.00** Wood Wizard **2.30** Home Again with Bob Vila **3.00** This Old House with Steve and Norm **3.30** Go Fishing

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **4.30** Walker's World **5.00** Flightline **5.30** History's Turning Points **6.00** Animal Doctor **6.30** Hunters **7.30** Beyond 2000 **8.00** Outback Adventures **8.30** Uncharted Africa **9.00** Shark Hunters **10.00** Bodyguards **11.00** Weapons of War **12.00am** F Company **1.00** History's Turning Points **1.30** Flightline **2.00** Close

ANIMAL PLANET

12.00pm Wonder of Baby Animals **1.00** Nature Watch with Julian Pettifer **1.30** Australia Wild **2.00** Wild Rescues **2.30** Human/Nature **3.30** Harry's Practice **4.00** Jack Hanna's Zoo Life **4.30** Animal Doctor **5.00** Pet Rescue **5.30** Australia Wild **6.00** The New Adventures of Black Beauty **6.30** Lassie **7.00** Rediscovery of the World: Channel Islands **8.00** Animal Doctor **8.30** Animal X **9.00** Ocean Wilds **9.30** Emergency Vets **10.00** Wildest Asia **10.30** Vet School **11.30** Emergency Vets **12.00am** Close

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

7.00pm Ambada **7.30** Avalanche! **8.00** The Shark Files: Tales of the Tiger Shark **9.00** Islands of Eden **9.30** Friday Night Wild: Silvereyes in Paradise **10.00** Friday Night Wild: The Okavango **11.00** Friday Night Wild: Vietnam — Wildlife for Sale **11.30** Friday Night Wild: Wolverines and Oil **12.00am** Friday Night Wild: Forgotten Apes

HISTORY

4.00pm The World at War: Wolf Pack **5.00** Pyramids: Majesty and Mystery **6.00** Ancient Mysteries: Private Lives of Emperors **7.00** Dr Livingstone I Presume?

CARLTON FOOD

9.00am Food Network Daily **9.30** Food for Thought **10.00** First Taste **10.30** Worrall Thompson Cooks **11.00** What's Cooking? **11.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **12.00pm** Food Network Daily **12.30** Newman Meets **1.00** Food for Thought **1.30** An Umbrian Kitchen **2.00** Can't Stand the Heat **2.30** Food Network Daily **3.00** For Better, for Worse **3.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **4.00** New Chefs on the Block **4.30** Tessa Bramley's Country Kitchen **5.00** Close

LIVING

6.00am Tiny and Crew **6.20** Philbert the Frog **6.30** Johnson and Friends **6.45** Tiny Tales **6.50** Polka Dot Shorts **7.00** Practical Parenting **7.05** Professor Bubble **7.30** Caillou **7.35** Bug Alert **7.55** Practical Parenting **8.00** Barney and Friends **8.30** Tiny Tales **8.35** Tiny and Crew **8.50** Practical Parenting **9.00** Diet Show **9.30** The Roseanne Show **10.00** The Jerry Springer Show **10.50** Maury Povich **11.40** Living Issues **12.10pm** Animal Rescue **12.40** Rescue 911 **1.10** Special Babies **1.40** Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction **2.10** LA Law **3.10** Living Room **4.00** Michael Cole **4.50** Rolonda **5.40** Ready, Steady, Cook **6.15** The Jerry Springer Show **7.05** Rescue 911 **7.35** Animal Rescue **8.00** Murder Call **9.00 FILM: A Cry in the Dark (1988)** **11.30** Sex Lie Down Under **12.00am** Close

ZEE TV

5.30am Music Time **6.00** Sorry Meri Lorry **6.30** Mast Mast Show **7.00** Faith **7.30** News **8.00** Ghoomta Aagna **8.30** Saalaab **9.00** Adhikar **10.00** Anhoni **11.00** Zaika Ka Safar **11.30** Parampara **12.00pm FILM: Hindi Movie: Sangram** **3.00** Zee Bangla **3.30** Its My Choice **4.00** Campus **4.30** Zee Zone **5.30** Amanat **6.00** Artist of the Fortnight **6.30** Zee and You: Showcase **7.00** Chasme Baddoor **7.30** Entertainment Express **8.00** News **8.30** Aashirwad **9.30 FILM: Hindi Movie: Meri Bhai Shaadi** **12.00am** News **12.30** Ru-Ba-Ru **1.00** X-Zone **2.00 FILM: Hindi Movie: Awaaz**

TENPIN BOWLING 47

Buck out to prove she is Team England's queen of the alleys

SPORT



CRICKET 46

Nasser Hussain stands by to fill England's troublesome No 3 slot

FRIDAY JANUARY 15 1999

Dispute with club over Concorde trip prompts debate about future

Merson reveals Villa rift

BY RICHARD HOBSON

PAUL MERSON believes that he may have to leave Aston Villa, just four months after joining the FA Carling Premiership championship contenders from Middlesbrough for £6.75 million. Having departed the Riverside Stadium amid acrimony over claims of a drinking and gambling culture, the England midfield player now says that John Gregory, the Villa manager, is failing to understand his problems as a recovering alcoholic.

Since returning on Monday from a weekend trip by Concorde to New York, Merson said that he has been neglected in training by Gregory. Villa allowed him time off, but are annoyed that he chose to spend some of it on an aeroplane without their knowledge when he has been suffering with a back problem.

Merson argued that he was feeling "down and depressed" and needed the trip as a pick-me-up after such a long

Venables deal 48
Salaries cap 48

absence. He is worried that, despite making a successful comeback for the reserves on Wednesday night, he will be overlooked for the game against Everton on Monday. A bigger suspicion is that Gregory has earmarked his position behind the front two for Juninho, who is struggling to earn a regular place with Atlético Madrid.

"It is four years now since I faced up to my addictions and everyone should know by now about that situation, how hard it is for me every now and then," Merson said. "The trip to America was intended to give me a lift. I know Villa paid a lot of money for me, but my addiction is part of the package. If the boss here doesn't understand it, there is going to be a problem.

"Bryan Robson [the Middlesbrough manager] was as good as gold. He gave me a few days off if I was down — at one stage he was even prepared to send me to Tenerife for a week — and it was the same as at Arsenal. Villa have paid a lot of money for me, but it is my life we are talking about. I know how close I was to the edge. I am not bigger than the club, I am simply doing what is right for me. If Villa want the best from me, they have to show some leeway.

"I don't think the boss agrees with what I did at the weekend. Since I returned he has not talked to me. I find that odd, and as a 30-year-old I don't need it. I do not see myself being picked against Everton. As for the future, I don't know. I will have to take it one day at a time, but I am not happy with all the negative stuff that has come out."

Gregory is understood to be annoyed, having said in the initial stages of Merson's injury, which has kept him out since the end of November, that he would do all he could to keep the player involved with the team. He has also designated the post-match bar an alcohol-free zone.

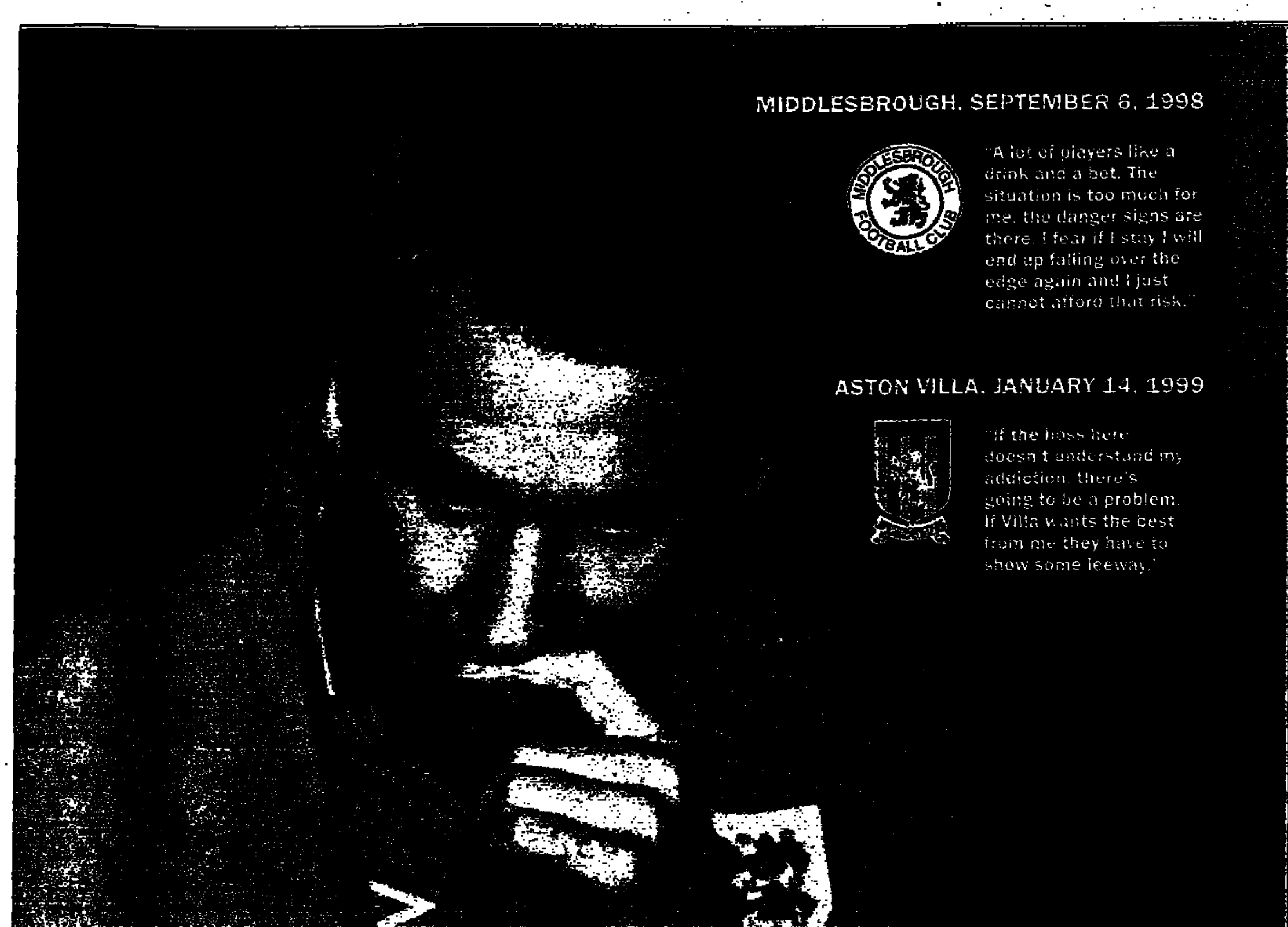
Dion Dublin and Julian Joachim have recently become the established front pairing and Villa have been most effective with two "holding" players supporting Lee Hendrie in midfield. It would be understandable if Gregory continued with this combination while Merson improved his match fitness in the reserves.

Merson still attends meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and has always been open about his problems. He also had a gambling addiction and took recreational drugs while with Arsenal. Last September he expressed concern that the environment at Middlesbrough could push him back towards excess.

He said at the time: "A lot of the players like a drink and a bet. The situation is too much for me — the danger signs are there. I have got to the stage where I have seen the *Racing Post* in the dressing-room and flicked through it. That is dangerous. I fear if I stay I will end up falling over the edge."

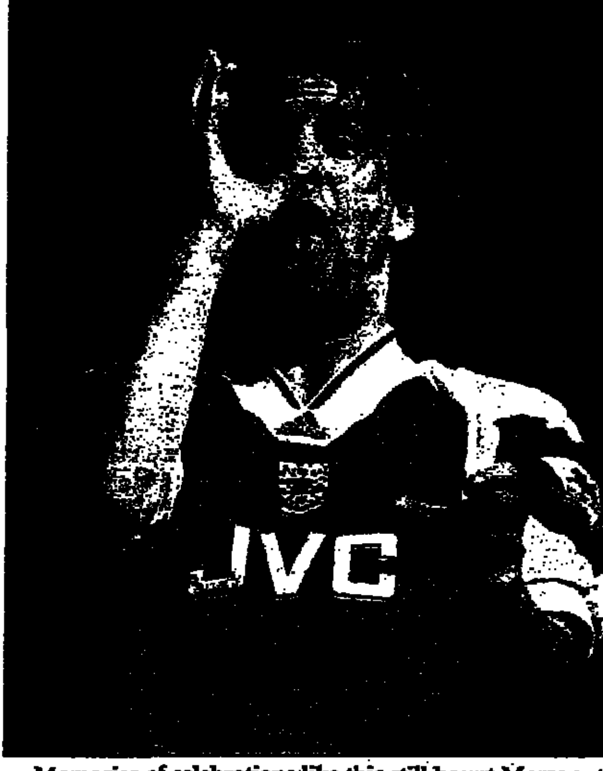
Such remarks infuriated team-mates and a more cynical view suggested that Merson wanted to engineer a transfer. Since then, Middlesbrough have given Paul Gascoigne help to try to overcome his own problems relating to stress, depression and alcohol abuse. The danger is that, after experiencing difficulties with both Middlesbrough and Villa, Merson may find other clubs reluctant to invest in his undoubted talent.

A spokesman for Alcoholics Anonymous said that depression could heighten vulnerability to drink. "If he has been four years sober he is well on the way, but we all have our ups and downs in a manner that possibly other people do not understand," the spokesman said. "He has to do what is best for himself."



Merson believes that Gregory, the Aston Villa manager, does not understand his problems as a recovering alcoholic. Photograph: Tim Ockenden

SHAUN BOTTERILL / ALLSPORT



Memories of celebrations like this still haunt Merson

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1615

ACROSS
1 Abode of the blest (8)
5 To wind up (4)
9 Inquiry; thorough review (13)
10 Father of Cordelia (4)
11 Type of sacking fabric; one from Wiesbaden (7)
13 Early-development stage (6)
15 Film-festival Riviera town (6)
18 Stylish confidence (7)
20 Filth; where to find *brass?* (4)
23 Easily control, defeat (3,5,5)
24 Seize (4)
25 Get back, salvage (8)

DOWN
1 Narrow-minded hypocrite (4)
2 Entertainment with sketches (5)
3 Obliterate (7)
4 Slender; small (6)
6 Point of view (7)
7 Bolshevik creed (8)
8 Disfigures; a god (4)
12 Overtake; children's game (8)
14 Source of (sudden) wealth (7)
16 A fan (7)
17 Association, alliance (6)
19 Cot; copy (another's work) (4)
21 Bring about; reason (5)
22 Woodworking tool (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1614
ACROSS: 1 Vassal 5 Weed 9 Triplet 10 Reason 11 Paralyse 12 Absorb 15 Urbane 18 Numerous 20 Margin 22 English 23 Rude 24 Sphere
DOWN: 2 Astral 3 Sri Lanka 4 Lolly 6 Elba 7 Devour 8 Streak 13 Skirmish 14 Kennel 16 Reaper 17 Author 19 Magus 21 Goad

Arsenal reach decision day on £5m Kanu

BY MATT DICKINSON

THE SAGA of Nwanko Kanu's on-off transfer to Arsenal appears to have been rumbling on since time began, but it will reach a conclusion one way or the other today. Which way depends on the verdict of the Arsenal medical staff and whether the board is in the mood for a gamble.

After agreeing a fee of up to £5 million with Internazionale and personal terms with the player, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, is hopeful that he will finally be adding the 22-year-old forward to a squad that is short of attacking options.

However, he must wait for the definitive judgment of the doctors who spent much of yesterday putting Kanu through stringent examinations in London. The player's medical history is notable for significant heart and knee problems and Arsenal have been understandably cautious in their negotiations.

Kanu, who won the European Cup with Ajax in 1996, was thought to have lost his promising career because of a defective heart valve, which was discovered shortly after his move from Amsterdam to Inter, one of the two giant Milan clubs. He underwent surgery in the United States in the spring of 1997.

A year later, he had completed a remarkable recuperation, returning to the Inter team and scoring on his debut, but there have been knee problems since. He hardly played a game last season and has recently suffered from cartilage trouble.

Wenger had hoped initially to sign Kanu on loan; but a lack of transfer options has persuaded him to push for a permanent deal. He is well aware of the need for reinforcements in attack, where Nicolas Anelka still lacks experience and Dennis Bergkamp is suffering a succession of minor injuries. Kanu, a versatile player, could deputise for both.

"He will be a big asset to us because he can play as a striker or off the striker," Wenger said. "He can take both roles. He has proved his talent at club and international level. His chances at Internazionlae were limited because they have both Roberto Baggio and Youri Djorkaeff, but he is training again now and hopefully there will not be a problem. I am hopeful that the deal will go through."

If Kanu does move to North London, he will do so just as Bergkamp is set to return to the Arsenal line-up. The Holland striker is hoping to play against Nottingham Forest at the City Ground tomorrow after two games out with a shin injury.

Bergkamp has previously been ruled out of nine matches this season with a collection of knocks, including back, ankle and calf problems, but Wenger is hopeful he is finally ready for a sustained in the side, for whom he has scored just six goals this season — compared to 14 at this stage last term.

Tony Adams is also likely to be restored to the defence after seven weeks out with back trouble, replacing Steve Bould, who was carried off



Kanu: injury doubts

against Liverpool last Saturday and looks likely to miss the trip to Nottingham, although the threat of cartilage surgery has been ruled out.

Adams came through a reserve game at Northampton on Monday, as did Nigel Winterburn, the full back who damaged a hamstring against Middlesbrough on November 29 and has missed the past eight games.

Meanwhile, Arsenal continue to examine options to move from Highbury, including a possible site for a new ground at King's Cross. The London club, which earlier this season contemplated switching to Wembley Stadium, is unlikely to be able to make any significant changes to its present ground, where a capacity of 38,500 places a huge restriction on income.

Hodgson vents his spleen over attitude of Blackburn players

BY MATT DICKINSON

WHEN Roy Hodgson was dismissed by Blackburn Rovers this season, quite a few players were believed to be glad to see the back of him. An unexpected outburst from the former Ewood Park manager would suggest that the feelings were mutual.

Hodgson was bitter at the speed with which he was discarded by the struggling FA Carling Premiership club, but it is only now that his spleen is emptying with a needless admission that he does not care to see Blackburn win.

In particular, his anger is directed at Tim Sherwood, the club captain, whom Hodgson accuses of stirring dressing-room unrest and causing agitation among other players. The midfield player had hoped to leave Ewood Park in a transfer to Tottenham Hotspur, and Hodgson believes that the blocking of the deal created friction that the rest of the squad could not cope with.



Hodgson: outburst

"One of the major factors [behind the sacking] was Sherwood's discontent at not being allowed to go to Spurs," Hodgson told *The Last Word* on Sky Sports. "At the time, he had done a very good job captaining the team and was always very supportive to myself and the team, as well as doing a good job behind the scenes.

"He became very disenchanted with the club and everything around the place when a prospective Tottenham move fell through. Being such an important character at the club, his disaffection spread to a lot of other players who did not have the strength of character or personality or experience to stand up against somebody who was finding fault with most things.

"I don't think anybody has the right to come into clubs and, for their own selfish reasons, start saying that a player should go here or stay. When you work for a club, you have to work for their best interests. I explained that to Tim on many occasions."

Hodgson, who has yet to find a full-time coaching job since his dismissal, offered a lukewarm response when asked if he liked to see Blackburn win under the management of Brian Kidd. "I would like to say yes, but that might be a dishonest answer," he said. "There are still the players I brought to the club, and I worked with, and to some extent I wish them well."

To some extent may not be enough to save Hodgson from a cool reception on his next trip back to Blackburn.

Nicklaus to have hip operation

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

JACK NICKLAUS is to have hip replacement surgery later this month and, as a consequence, will not play in the Masters at Augusta in April for the first time in 40 years.

Nicklaus, who will be 59 next week, has been putting off surgery on his arthritic left hip in the hope that an exercise routine would allow him to play without pain. That course has proved unsuccessful and so Nicklaus, the winner of 18 major championships, will have an operation January 27.

"When I feel strong enough and able to play golf at a competitive level, I will continue to play tournament golf," Nicklaus said in a statement. "If I want to play later this year and in the future, now is the time for surgery."

Nicklaus, who has won the Masters on six occasions, did not say when he might return, although later this year is not out of the question. Full recovery from hip surgery usually takes at least four months. He was hobbling so badly at times last year that he was forced to end his run of 146 consecutive major championships by pulling out of the Open at Birkdale.

"I can hit golf balls all I want. And I can walk," Nicklaus said in October. "But the two of them — they don't like each other."

Nicklaus, who first played Augusta National as an amateur in 1959, showed last year he can still compete with the best. He became the oldest player to finish in the top ten when he closed with a 68 and tied for sixth place, three strokes behind the winner, Mark O'Meara.

Nicklaus has said he wants to be able to play all four major championships in 2000, particularly because of their locations.

The US Open will be at Pebble Beach, where Nicklaus won in 1972. The Open will be at St. Andrews, where he won two of his three claret jugs, and the US PGA Championship will be at Valhalla, outside Louisville, Kentucky, a course Nicklaus designed.

